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Steffi in fighting form

Ofer brothers acquire control of Israel Corp.

Jerusalem Post Staff and Globes

In a dramatic turnaround, brothers Sami and Yuli Ofer yesterday reached an agreement in principle to purchase the Eisenberg family's shares (53 percent) in the Israel Corporation for \$330 million.

The transaction, announced last night by the Offers, represents a company value of \$624m., 21.5% higher than market value, which yesterday stood at \$512m.

The Offers executed the grab, while negotiations between Ervin Eisenberg and Canada's Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan were in full swing.

The negotiations with the Offers reportedly lasted five hours on Wednesday, and were conducted by telephone between the Ofer's lawyer, Ram Caspi, and Eisenberg's attorney, Yaakov Neeman, currently in New York. The agreement was brought to the notice of Potash yesterday.

The deal worked out by the parties provides that the Offers will deposit 10 percent of the sale price at the beginning of next week. The closing date of the transaction has been set for 90



Sami and Yuli Ofer

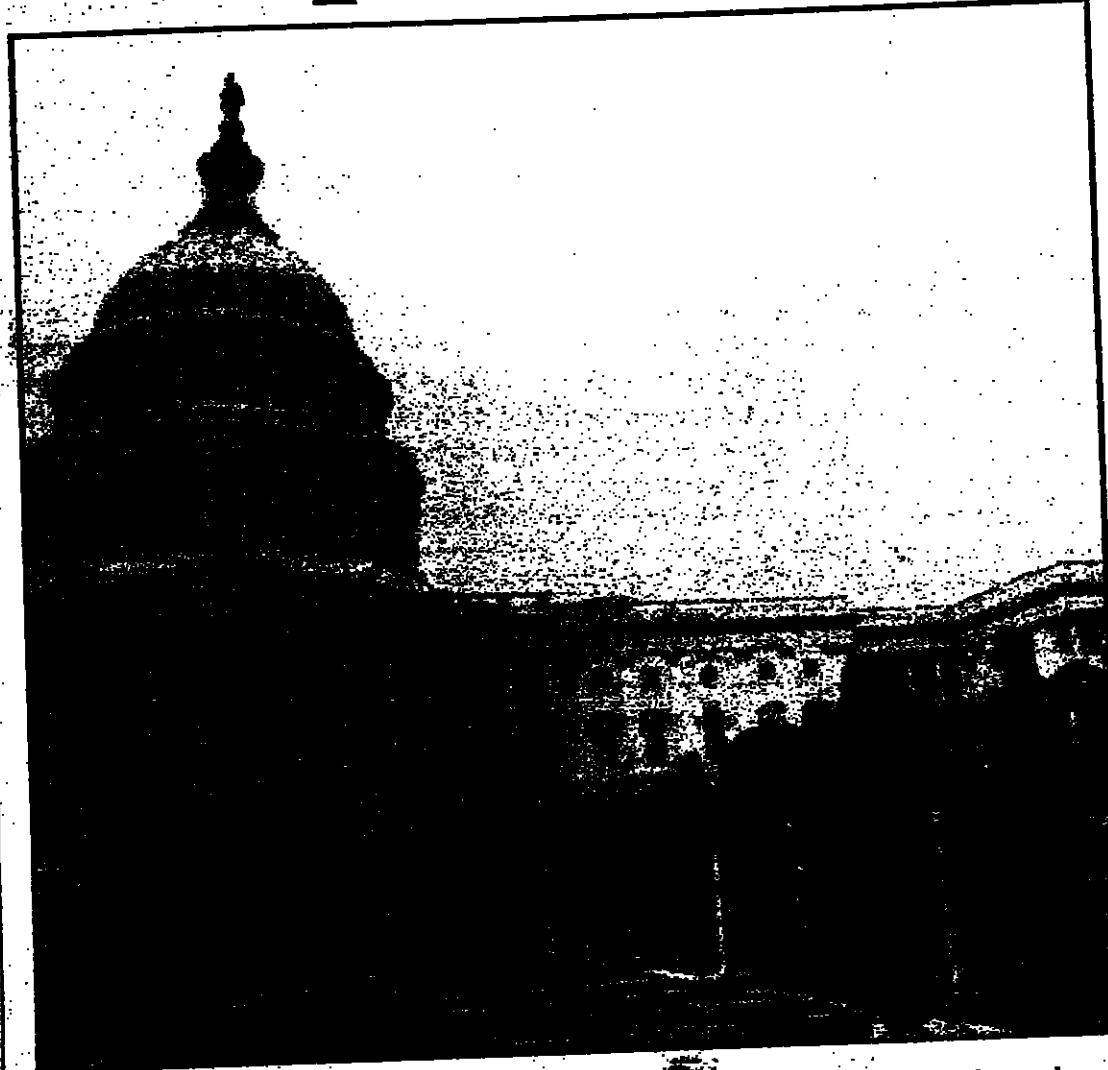
(Sivan Farag)

days from yesterday. It was thought Potash was prepared to pay Eisenberg a higher price for the family's shares, in the range of \$350 million. It seems, however, that Eisenberg was leery of the difficulties that started to crop up regarding the approval required for a deal with a foreign concern.

Neeman estimated that many more months would pass before the approvals required could be obtained, whereas the transaction with the Offers will more easily gain approval. In view of the family pressure exerted on Eisenberg to dispose of the holdings in the Israel Corp., he eventually preferred to close a quick and safer deal.

See OFFER, Page 4

Impeachment trial opens



Spectators wait in line outside the US Capitol yesterday, waiting for tickets to the impeachment trial. (Reuters)

Clinton's defense defies evidence and common sense, say prosecutors

By HILLEL KUTTLER and news agencies

WASHINGTON - Opening their case in the first presidential impeachment trial since 1868, House prosecutors told senators yesterday that President Bill Clinton "had not owned up" to "egregious and criminal" acts and should be removed from office.

Trial frenzy, Page 2

One week after the 100 senators were sworn in as jurors, Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist banged the proceedings back to order.

"The Senate will convene as a court of impeachment," he intoned, ordering the senators to rise, as chaplain Lloyd Ogilvie offered a prayer: "Dear Father, help us through this difficult time... we commit to You all that is said and done, and ultimately decided."

Before they opened their case, House managers filed a brief saying Clinton's defense defied "evi-

dence as well as common sense." House Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Hyde, the lead prosecutor, said the House had impeached Clinton simply because he had violated his oath to tell the truth and uphold the laws of the nation.

"In many ways, the case you will consider is about those two words - 'I do,'" Hyde said.

The historic proceedings were the first since President Andrew Johnson was impeached in 1868 for removing his secretary of war. Johnson was ultimately acquitted by a one-vote margin.

Hyde began the prosecution by impressing upon the senators the central point of his case - that taking an oath is a sacred act and one which Clinton betrayed. Sir Thomas More "went to his death rather than take an oath in vain," Hyde said.

Making a case before a silent jury of 100 senators, Republican F. James Sensenbrenner said a conviction of Clinton - requiring two-thirds of the senators - would send a message to all future presidents and public servants that lying under oath will not be tolerated.

See TRIAL, Page 12

17-year-old corruption allegations shake legal system

By LIAT COLLINS

Corrupt cops, a blackmailed judge, dishonest lawyers, and a framed conviction on a drug charge - these are the ingredients of a 17-year-old affair which burst into the media limelight yesterday.

If proven, could rock the country's law enforcement and political establishment. Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein, who has launched a full investigation, told a press conference that some of the evidence he has received appears to have been fabricated and he has not seen evidence that the judge was the victim of extortion.

The story broke yesterday in a report in *Me'ariv* by Ben Caspi.

There is a media blackout on some of the names of the people involved, many of whom are well known and have been promoted to high positions in their respective fields in the intervening years. One of the question marks hanging over the case, however, is why the alleged victim waited so long to raise the matter publicly.

According to Caspi, 17 years ago police officers led by Zion Peretz, now retired, apparently framed a member of a prominent business family in Tiberias on drug charges. The documents presented to Rubinstein claim that these policemen blackmailed the judge into convicting the man in order to block the promotion of an outsider to a senior police position.

See LEGAL, Page 2

SHABBAT	BEGINS	ENDS
Jerusalem	4:21 p.m.	5:36 p.m.
Tel Aviv	4:29 p.m.	5:38 p.m.
Bat Ha	4:29 p.m.	5:35 p.m.
Bnei Brak	4:38 p.m.	5:37 p.m.
Eilat	4:41 p.m.	5:42 p.m.



Miss World accuses J'lem man of rape

By HEDI J. GLEIT

A Jerusalem man, Uri Shlomo, will likely be indicted on Sunday on charges of raping and attempting to kill Linor Abergil some two months before she became Miss World. Tel Aviv District Court yesterday lifted a publication ban on Abergil's claim that she was raped and assaulted in Italy in October by Shlomo.

Court President Ori Goren agreed to lift the comprehensive publication ban with one exception. He forbade publication of "details on the criminal past of the suspect, if he has one - and on this subject it is only permitted to make public that in the past there have been complaints against [Shlomo] regarding sexual offenses."

An indictment against Shlomo probably will be presented on Sunday, said Ch.-Supt. Yaffa Golan, who is heading the investigation, which is being conducted with the help of the Italian police. Shlomo, 43, who operates a travel agency in Milan, was arrested when



Linor Abergil

(Israel Sun)

he arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport on Saturday night. The following morning, Ramle Magistrate's Court remanded him until this Tuesday on suspicion he raped and attempted to murder Abergil on the evening of October 6.

See RAPE, Page 4

PM: Tax reform may spare immigrants

By JESSICA STEINBERG

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will try to have the Income Tax Commission amend the proposed tax reform bill so that it does not worsen the tax conditions of immigrants, according to a letter received by the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI).

The letter to AACI president Steve Kohn says possible options include extending the tax-exempt period, exemptions for immigrants, and tax exemption on

income earned from foreign assets that are reported, registered, and taxed abroad. Following a recent meeting among Kohn, other immigrant organization representatives, Prime Minister's Office Adviser for Diaspora Affairs Bobby Brown and Director of Economic Affairs Eyal Gabbai, Gabbai met with Income Tax Commissioner Yonatan Kaplan and "was assured that the Commission would try to amend this proposed bill," wrote Netanyahu.

See TAX, Page 4

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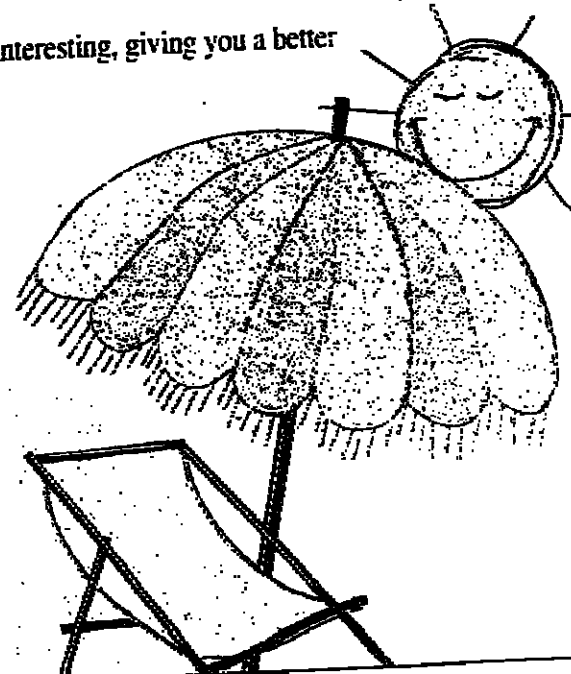
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NEWS

in brief

Most charges against striking students dropped

The Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court confirmed yesterday that four more charges against students involved in November demonstrations to reduce tuition fees have been dropped. This reduces the number of outstanding charges to 11 out of 50 originally brought.

tim

Gov't to refurbish historic sites

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has decided to spend tens of millions of shekels to refurbish historic sites. "We have decided to spend NIS 28 million to refurbish Acre Prison, which will also provide jobs there," he told a meeting of Likud veterans last night. "We will also refurbish 50 other sites of Jewish heroism throughout the country, so that the younger generation will know the story of 100 years of Zionism."

tim

Sharon to visit Moscow next week

Russia said yesterday Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon would visit Moscow on January 19-20 and expressed hope the talks would boost the Middle East peace process.

"During the talks, the two sides will have a detailed discussion of how to rectify the situation with the implementation of Palestinian-Israeli agreements," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin said. "We hope that the discussion of Russian and Israeli approaches toward these issues will be held in a productive and constructive way and will facilitate the peace process."

Sharon's visit was postponed last month after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu froze the Wye River accord because of alleged Palestinian violations.

Reuters

Opening of The Trial

WASHINGTON - The morning of the opening of "The Trial" and John Czwartacki is holding court in the Senate press gallery. He is peppered with questions about a Republican caucus an hour earlier, and about the Senate's schedule for the coming three days, when House of Representatives prosecutors will make the case for President Bill Clinton's removal from office under one or both of the impeachment articles.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By HILLEL KUTLER

Czwartacki, the spokesman for Senate majority leader Trent Lott, answers as patiently as he can, his legs crossed on the brown leather chair. Breaks between sessions of the prosecution's opening statements will be short, he says, knitting a hand through the air to emphasize. Senators will not speak with the press during the short recesses, he adds, so as not to engage in a partisan "tit for tat" over the airwaves.

One floor below, in the corridor down which the House prosecution managers walked last week to present the article of impeachment, all is eerily quiet, considering the momentousness of what will follow in two hours, Capitol police, for now, ignore reporters milling around beyond the confining red ropes that once the trial begins will be put to better use.

The halls leading to Lott's office a few steps away, and to minority leader Tom Daschle's around the corner, are now sealed off to the public and press.

Democratic senators emerge from their own pre-trial caucus

and are immediately collared by the ever growing crowd of journalists.

The scribbles and reports in the morning newspapers that the House managers and Senate Republicans have met with potential witnesses, even though the Senate voted last week to postpone a decision on calling witnesses until later this month.

"This is a clear violation of the agreement," says Daschle.

"I think such expartite meetings, as they are known in the law, are inappropriate in the context of impartiality and fairness," says John Kerry.

"We certainly want to keep the bipartisan spirit going and there may be an explanation for [the reports]," says Charles Schumer.

The corridor, named for its famed oak Ohio Clock, is filling up, everyone all but oblivious to the white marble busts and oil portraits of American vice presidents.

One bust, sculpted in 1966 by Gualberto Rocchi, faces left toward the main Senate door, an entryway the subject himself might have strode through for his own impeachment trial in 1974.

The text beneath the bust recalled how Richard Nixon, after rising to the presidency, oversaw the end of the Vietnam War and detente with the Soviet Union.

"Overshadowed by the Watergate scandal and under threat of impeachment," the text continued, "Nixon became the only US president to resign from office."

Defense Ministry OKs IDF reforms

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai yesterday approved the latest IDF multi-year plan until the year 2003.

The plan calls for the IDF's modernization through the procurement of new fighter jets, increase in the attack helicopter fleets, and the absorption of the anti-ballistic Arrow missile batteries. The introduction of other weapons systems are also figured into the multi-year plan such as the three Dolphin-class submarines built by Germany and the Nautilus laser gun designed to shoot down Katyusha rockets.

Mordechai approved the plan after it was presented by top IDF commanders in his office yesterday. Until now, all of the IDF's multi-year plans have been aborted, mainly due to lack of funds. This year the defense ministry budget is supposed to be increased, and Mordechai said that he has won assurances from the Treasury for the continued rearmament of the IDF.

Winning numbers

In yesterday's Palya Hatzak drawing, ticket number 376628 won NIS 1.5 million, while ticket number 845313 won the car. Tickets: 235435, 853324, 707369, 125320, 779473, 698832, 353102 and 844845 won NIS 5,000.

Tickets ending in 48290, 34642, 54826, 58697, 52041, 42957, 30133, 26345, 77102, 54133, 23285, 53999, 15829, 71082, 93112, 80243, 08390, 38108 and 22791 won NIS 1,000.

Tickets ending in 791 (072, 675 and 765 won NIS 100). Tickets ending in 04, 12, 33 and 55 won 30 NIS. Tickets ending in 85 and 03 won 20 NIS. Tickets ending in 0 and 9 won NIS 10.

Search continues for terrorist

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

IDF and General Security Service forces continued their manhunt yesterday for a Palestinian gunman who took part in a shootout Wednesday night with an undercover border police unit in which First Sergeant Yehoshua Gideon was killed.

Gideon, 25, was laid to rest in the military section of Ashdod Cemetery yesterday afternoon. Among those attending the funeral were his comrades in arms, Minister of Internal Security Avigdor Kahalani, Police Inspector-General Yehuda Wilk, Judea and Samaria Border Police Commander Danny Ronen and Border Police undercover unit Deputy-Commander E.

The shootout took place between two gunmen and an undercover Border Police unit at the Otziel Junction in the southern Hebron Hills. The gunmen, believing the unit was a group of Israelis travelling in a car opened fire, critically wounding Gideon, who died shortly afterward in hospital.

The unit returned fire, seriously wounding one of the attackers, who was captured, and pursued the other who fled the area.

An IDF officer leading a Golani unit that assisted in the pursuit was wounded in the arm and taken to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba.

Speaking with reporters at the scene yesterday morning, OC Judea and Samaria Maj.-Gen. Yitzhak Eitan said the undercover unit has been operating in the area for months due to an escalation of shooting attacks on highways. The unit has carried out very complicated operations to prevent terror attacks, but its operations on Wednesday night were not specifically directed at the two gunmen, Eitan said, adding that without a doubt their actions prevented an attack on Israeli citizens.

"Not every suspicious move-



Border policemen mourn yesterday in Ashdod at the funeral of First Sergeant Yehoshua Gideon, killed in a terrorist ambush near Hebron Wednesday night.

(Israel Sun)

ment is perceived as one made by suspected terrorists. Therefore opening fire at suspicious movements is problematic," he said.

While the majority of terror cells operating in the region have been

uncovered, it is not clear whether the cell which attacked on Wednesday was the same as the one which carried out an attack two months ago. On November 10, 1998, in exactly the same area,

gunmen set up an ambush at the junction and opened fire at an IDF patrol, wounding two soldiers.

Security forces searched the villages in the area and according to reports arrested several



First Sergeant Yehoshua Gideon

Palestinian suspects yesterday.

A Palestinian Authority security officer said that the PA has not made any arrests in the part of Hebron under its control.

Earlier in the week, the commander of the undercover Border Police units operating in Judea and Samaria told reporters they had carried out more than 770 operations in 1998 and arrested some 180 Palestinians, 150 wanted by the GSS. Sixty percent of the units' operations were carried out undercover, he said.

Gideon is survived by his mother, a brother, and a sister. He immigrated to Israel from India at the age of 15, his father died two years later and he joined the Border Police at age 18. His brother, Ofer, said on Israel Radio that he always asked him how he could carry out such work, knowing that he would never receive recognition for his undercover activities. He said Yehoshua told him that the best publicity was the announcement that a terror attack had been prevented. "Now the entire country knows my hero," he said, weeping.

Ben Lynfield contributed to this report.

Arens in Hebron: Likud is in dire straits

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

By DAKNA BACHMAN

Moshe Arens launched his campaign for the Likud leadership yesterday in a quiet manner, sitting down to talk about reviving the Likud with half a dozen settlement leaders in Hebron.

"We all know that the Likud is in dire straits. The best of its sons are leaving, and the loyalty of others is wavering. We need to begin talking about the real issues of the day - the political and social issues troubling this country - and stop with all the dirty politics," he said. "I want to change the level of debate in the party and in the country."

Sitting in his blue windbreaker under a "Jewish sites in Hebron" poster, and surrounded by the rabbis, spokesmen, and leaders of the Hebron community, Arens seemed at home. He comes to the city often, he said, bringing guests from abroad to visit, or stopping by to see acquaintances.

The souk scene doesn't interest him; American spin doctors are not his style; police escorts are not his thing. He walks the city alone, posing for a picture in front of the Machpela Cave, chatting briefly with the small press corps, repeating over and over again that Hebron is the first city of King David, and shaking about



Candidate for Likud leadership Moshe Arens (left) speaks with Jewish residents in Hebron yesterday.

(Flash 90)

three hands.

Arens, who decided to run for the Likud leadership on Sunday and put together his campaign team on Monday, has less than two weeks to take his case to the Likud faithful. Mostly, he plans to target the local party branches, said his three campaign managers, but there will also be field

visits in the places that count.

The tour to Hebron is rich in symbolism, and although Arens does not state it explicitly, he is here to show the far right that he is their only Likud hope. "I have a special connection to this city, and support its expansion," he said, crossing from Gross Square toward the Avraham Avinu neigh-

borhood, completely ignoring the glances of the local Palestinians who are trying to figure out just who he is.

"Hebron has great historical importance, enormous Zionist meaning, and we need to ensure that the Jewish presence here is strengthened."

If it had been up to him, he said,

he would not have carried out the Hebron Accords. "If I am in power, you won't find gaps between my words and my actions," he added, taking a not-so-subtle swipe at the man he is credited with bringing to power - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But this country has changed since the 1980s, when hard-liner Arens went off to Washington as ambassador to explain why Israel could never sit down to talk to the Palestinians.

Another hard-liner, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, said Wednesday he could envision a Palestinian state under very particular circumstances. Yesterday was Arens' turn to come to terms with reality. He admitted that the "signs of a Palestinian state are, to a certain extent, and for the most part already in existence."

"When we reach a point after final-status negotiations - and I am not so sure that will happen - then, maybe after many years, in those areas not under Israeli sovereignty, there may be Palestinian sovereignty," he said, looking apologetic.

"Ahh, it's Misha" said Ali, a shopkeeper opening up his store to serve the Moslems breaking the Ramadan fast. "He says he's the right wing, which wants to buy up all the houses from here to Kiryat Arba, but they're all the same, these politicians. If he wins, he won't do anything new."

LEGAL

Continued from Page 1

This was later reported to be IDF Brig.-Gen. (res.) Avraham Baram, whom then police inspector-general Herzl Shafir wanted to appoint. Peretz denied the charges.

Several lawyers, including Bar Association head Dror Hoter-Yishai and two others who have since become judges, allegedly backed the police. Hoter-Yishai, the defense lawyer in the case, in television interviews last night

denied acting in collusion with the prosecution and said there is no basis to claims the judge was blackmailed.

But he said that, at the time, the police evidence was distorted and misleading. Among those he said investigated the case at the time was Dorit Beinisch, a former state attorney and now a Supreme Court justice.

The judge in the case, who is now in a very senior position, was allegedly suspected of raping a 17-year-old, who was then sent to the US to prevent her from filing a complaint. Shafir told Channel 2 last night that the Interior Ministry had told him at the time that Baram was friendly with someone convicted of drug offenses or possessing illegal weapons. The minister at the time was Yosef Burg.

The alleged framed victim, then a Tiberias resident, is asking for a retrial after serving a two-year prison sentence. He claimed he has solid evidence proving his innocence.

Ma'ariv also claimed that the group of policemen documented

most of its activities and these documents have been forwarded to Rubinstein, who yesterday said some were obvious forgeries. He said all the material will be thoroughly checked, but advised caution.

"Even at the initial stage, question marks arise concerning the authenticity [of some of the documents]," Rubinstein said. "I want to warn us all against spreading panic and fear... and not harming people for no reason, whether they be in the judicial or public establishment."

After the press conference, senior members of the Attorney-General's Office met to discuss the matter in view of the request for a retrial. Rubinstein also updated Supreme Court President Aharon Barak.

Former police inspector-general Assaf Hafez, under whose initial investigation into the police was conducted, said yesterday that, even if the charges turn out to be true, they do not involve the senior police echelon. Some of those involved have since retired and some have died, he said.

Other police officers said the alleged victim was one of 78 drug dealers caught in a police clampdown. Many also noted the upstanding nature of the judge allegedly involved.

But Knesset Law Committee chairman Hanan Porat (National Religious Party), who recently received material relating to the case, said last night he is shocked by the findings. He added that he has a document stating there had been a perversion of justice and police findings had been fabricated. He said the letter was from a "head of police investigations in recent years" to the police inspector-general, but refused to say whether the officer was Cmdr. Sando Mazor.

The Israel Police last night issued a statement calling the document an amateurish forgery and saying that Mazor and the secretaries who allegedly typed it had denied it.

In November 1997, a complaint against the policemen was lodged with the Justice Ministry's police internal affairs department. Despite the fact that the statute of

limitations applies to the alleged violations, the department carried out an investigation in preparation for a possible retrial. Last August, the department closed the file for lack of evidence. This decision was appealed in October.

Ten days ago, Porat asked for a retrial and forwarded to Rubinstein documents which he said the Justice Ministry did not have when it decided to close the file.

Likud MK Doron Shmueli, a friend of the alleged victim, said that when the results are published it will result in an upheaval throughout the establishment and loss of faith in the legal system.

Labor whip Elie Goldschmidt, who was then an intern in the office of the lawyer who represented the alleged victim in his appeal, said yesterday he had at the time believed in the man's innocence. "I pray these things will prove to be unfounded. I hope tomorrow morning we'll wake up and end this nightmare concerning the legal system."

tim contributed to this report.

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How Mordechai made peace in Labor

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai's spirit hovered over the Labor convention yesterday and then inspired Amnon Lipkin-Shahak to action.

Yesterday was a busy day politically and nearly all of the pivotal events of the day can be linked to one man - Mordechai - who ostensibly was not involved in any of them.

It is because of Mordechai that Labor chairman Ehud Barak agreed to a compromise of sorts on his party's slate of Knesset candidates; it is because of Mordechai that MK Haim Ramon agreed to accept the compromise which fell short of his objectives; it is because of Mordechai that he did not bolt Labor; and it is because of Mordechai that Shahak decided to finally try and end the impasse between him and Dan Meridor.

Barak and Shahak each hoped to jump Mordechai into a political alliance. He is potentially the most lucrative acquisition of this political season. He would have given momentum to any list he joined. Whoever would have managed to recruit Mordechai would also have been likely to have Ramon on his side. And like Mordechai, Ramon is one of the most desirable players around, but he would have headed to where Mordechai was going.

Had Mordechai joined Shahak, Ramon would have been able to conclude that Shahak is not a flash in the pan and is worth taking a risk for.

Had Mordechai instead opted for Barak, Ramon would have realized that Barak's prospects have been immensely enhanced and that there is no point leaving him.

During the long weeks in which Ramon and Mordechai both vacillated, they were carefully watching each other all the while. But the jig was almost up for Ramon when Barak was about to usurp control of the Labor list of Knesset candidates and leave most of the primaries' runners out of safe slots. Ramon could not acquiesce to this but had also not decided between Barak and Shahak - largely because he was still watching Mordechai.

Then late Wednesday night Sara and Binyamin Netanyahu called on the Mordechais at their Motza home. They spent several hours chatting and bonding. Ramon did not need any further clue. He knew that for weeks Mordechai deliber-

ately avoided tete-a-tetes with Netanyahu and that if he did find himself alone with the prime minister, he made sure the meeting per-

tained to business only and did not touch on party politics. The chumminess of the family visit left little to Ramon's imagination.

It was now clear to him that he could not cross the lines and climb on the Shahak bandwagon, because without Mordechai the wagon would be stuck deep in the mud. And if Ramon decided to stick it out with Barak, so would Uzi Baram and Avraham Burg.

Now Shahak may only entice Nissim Zivili away from Labor, mostly because his relations with Barak are nearly as bad as those of Hagai Merom, who walked out of Labor earlier in the week.

Barak could also decipher the meaning of the visit by the Netanyahus to Motza. It is now less probable that he would have Mordechai at his side. Without that boost, he must take greater care not to antagonize fellow Laborites. The compromise Barak made was anyway no great sacrifice, because he still could manage some control of the list - though he would have to fight over each co-option of an outside candidate at the expense of primaries contestants.

Shahak too understood that the bonhomie at Motza severely decreases his chances to pull off the greatest deal in the political market place. So far Shahak is yet to manage any impressive coup. The fact that it is not even clear who he has at his side, and that he has not so much as come close to drawing up his list, is costing him dearly. The apparent loss of Mordechai propelled him to rush to Meridor and entreat him to drop his own prime ministerial candidacy and join forces forthwith.

All that must have left Netanyahu smiling broadly yesterday. Chances now are that he won't lose Mordechai, that Barak won't be fortified by him and most of all that Barak would maintain his lead over Shahak.

Netanyahu has made it clear that he prefers a second round face off with Barak. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, by accepting Netanyahu into his home, Mordechai may have just helped make that happen.

Labor reaches deal on safe slots

Ramon to remain in party after expressing confidence in Barak

By LIAT COLLINS

The Labor Party's two-day convention in Tel Aviv ended last night with conciliation rather than conflict.

Under a compromise, party leader Ehud Barak will be authorized to negotiate with figures and parties about joining the Labor Knesset list, but will have to receive central committee approval for each safe slot. The places are meant for "exceptional figures" of such standing that they provide a significant contribution to the party, Barak said. The primary elections are slated for February 15.

MK Haim Ramon, who was reportedly considering leaving the party over Barak's proposal to allow him to personally appoint people to four safe slots, said he would stay in the party, but called for greater cooperation among the leadership. He expressed his confidence in Barak as the man who can lead Labor to victory.

Barak backed down on his original demands after speaking to MKs Yossi Beilin, Uzi Baram, Shlomo Ben-Ami, and Ramon and Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg. The compromise, which was endorsed by the convention, allows for Barak to continue to try to form an umbrella body, One Israel, to complement the party.

Beilin, who was instrumental in reaching the compromise, said, "This is a true compromise and not just a bridge of words."

He said he hopes that Hagai Merom, who earlier this week defected from Labor to Amnon Lipkin-Shahak's party, will be the last to leave. He also called on Shahak to join forces with Barak.

The convention unanimously approved reserving the second slot for former party leader Shimon Peres, and saved the seventh slot for secretary-general Ra'anan Cohen.



Labor Party secretary-general Ra'anan Cohen (right) makes a point to MK Haim Ramon at the party convention yesterday.

(Mati Milstein/Israel Sun)

Five slots in the top 30 were reserved for women. There will be 13 places for the national representatives, before the district and sectoral representatives.

If at Wednesday night's opening, the stage belonged to Barak, yesterday it was Ramon who was in the limelight. "If there is a lesson to what happened in these two days, it was... give us credit; we want you to win no less than we

want to win. Give us credit; we are partners, we're not rivals. There are sometimes victories which are really a loss and losses which are really victories. I believe that is what happened today. No one won and no one lost, what won in the end was wisdom and the real chance we will never again make the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past two days."

Despite the general atmosphere of conciliation, Ramon said he does not know of "ministering angels" whose contribution will be so great it justifies reserving safe slots for them.

He later told reporters, "I always said I am in the Labor Party. And what I meant today is that the party will win and Ehud Barak will be prime minister."

Ramon also called on the party to make an effort not to drive certain sectors away. "You can't win with just [the Tel Aviv neighborhoods of] Sheinkin and Ramat Aviv Gimmel; it's impossible without the traditional and religious."

In answer to speeches mentioning Geshet leader David Levy, Barak said, "David Levy is important and worthy of being in Israel's future national leadership."

Itim contributed to this report.

Itim contributed to this report.

Itim contributed to this report.

Itim contributed to this report.

Rubinstein warns against violence

Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein yesterday said complaints concerning public figures will be handled with extra caution and the State Attorney's Office will use discretion to decide whether to prosecute election violence cases before or after the elections.

He called on party leaders to act in accordance with the law and to serve as an example to their supporters.

Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz should immediately end his

plans to organize a workers party and start worrying about his responsibilities as head of the labor organization. Meretz secretary-general Hanan Erez said yesterday.

Erez demanded that Peretz work to ensure that striking Histadrut workers immediately get the wages owed to them from December.

Peretz, a Labor Party MK, announced Wednesday that he would be establishing a workers party, which will hold its founding convention on Sunday.

Liav Collins and Nina Gilbert

By SARAH HONG

Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and Ronni Milo went to Dan Meridor's office yesterday afternoon to talk him into joining forces with them now.

It was not Shahak's first attempt to reach an agreement with Meridor, and, as in their previous meetings, there was no sign of progress.

Both Shahak and Meridor have declared their candidacy for prime minister and both claim to represent the political center. The assumption is that they will eventually have to come together, though at this point neither is willing to give up his prime ministerial aspirations.

Milo, who also briefly had his hat in the prime ministerial ring, has withdrawn his candidacy and is backing Shahak. He urged Meridor to do the same immediately.

There was deep disappointment around both Shahak and Meridor following the news that the Labor convention ended with a compromise, and MK Haim Ramon will not be leaving the party for

Shahak. Apart from his own celebrity, Ramon was seen as someone who could have pulled other Labor luminaries out of the party with him.

There is also disappointment over indications that Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai may be patching up his rift with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. The two spent several hours together Wednesday night, when the prime minister and his wife visited Mordechai and his family at their Motza home. This was seen as the first concrete sign that Mordechai is likely to stay in the Likud.

More significant yet is the fact that Netanyahu and Mordechai are slated to hold a follow-up meeting today. The talk in the Likud is that they will put together an agreement in writing.

Mordechai must declare his intentions by January 22, the deadline for putting names on the



Amnon Lipkin-Shahak greets Egyptian Ambassador Mohammed Bassiouny yesterday.

er an agreement in writing. Mordechai must declare his intentions by January 22, the deadline for putting names on the

party ballot for Knesset candidates. The Likud central committee will elect the Knesset list on February 8.

Meridor reacted yesterday by saying, "We are moving ahead and will welcome whoever joins us. Mordechai will be asset wherever he is."

In a similar vein, Shahak declared that "the center party is on its way, full speed ahead. Ramon made his decision. Yitzhak Mordechai will probably soon make his as well. I am sure the public will understand that we are offering something new and that it will support us."

Shahak also said he will not accept MK Yossi Beilin's invitation to join Labor. "I was never a Labor Party member, and I am offering a new political direction."

ON THE RECORD

Give us credit; we are partners, we're not rivals - MK Haim Ramon to Labor Party leader Ehud Barak.

You can't win with just [the trendy Tel Aviv neighborhoods of] Sheinkin and Ramat Aviv Gimmel; it's impossible without the traditional and religious - Ramon.

The center party is on its way, full speed ahead - Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

If I am in power, you won't find gaps between my words and my actions - Moshe Arens.

International Young Art 1999

Sale in Tel Aviv: Thursday 21 January at 8pm
Sale in Chicago: Thursday 28 January at 6pm

Viewing hours in Tel Aviv
Friday 15 January 11am-2pm
Saturday 16 January 12noon-6pm
Sunday 17 January-Wednesday 20 January 12noon to 8pm

Viewing hours in Chicago
from Saturday 23 January

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Loretta Bourque 'Scream'
oil on canvas
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SOTHEBYS

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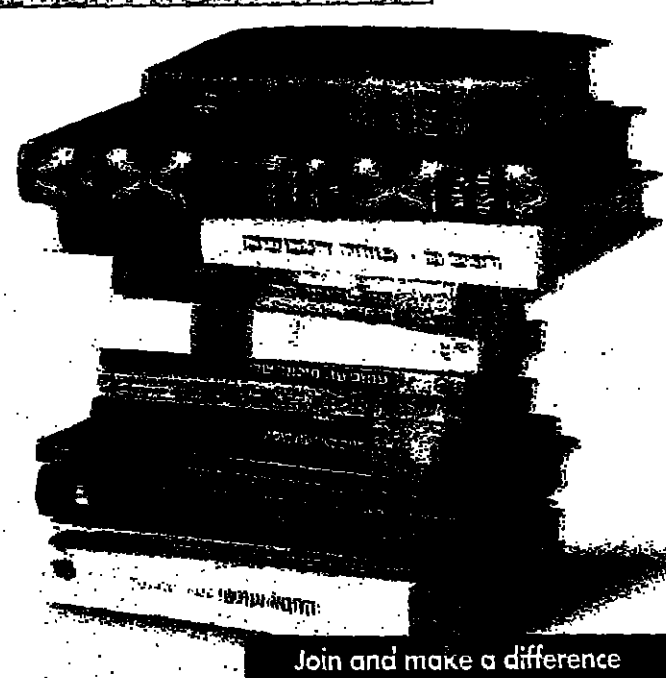
There are those who demand a halachic state and others who want to root out Judaism from our society and culture. There are those who ignore the riches of our Jewish tradition, and others who renounce democracy and all modern culture there are those who shout "Not one inch" and others who are impatient to give up parts of our homeland.

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NEWS

in brief

Miskay awarded Israel Prize

Prof. Aharon Miskay has won the Israel Prize for 1998 in the field of research in Hebrew literature. It was announced yesterday.

The Minister of Education and Culture Yitzhak Levy personally notified the laureate and congratulated him on his achievement.

The panel of judges pointed out that Miskay was receiving the prize in consideration for a life's work. His research includes ancient liturgy, poetry from the middle ages and midrashim of the Torah – and especially considers the connection between midrashic literature and religious poetry, where he opened up new pathways enabling a greater understanding of the original Hebrew.



Aharon Miskay

Monitors: IDF house demolitions violated pact

Israel violated an agreement to protect civilians when it demolished 14 houses in southern Lebanon last week, the Grapes of Wrath monitoring group said yesterday in Nakoura. The five-nation panel looked into 10 complaints filed by Lebanon and six by Israel.

The IDF bulldozed 14 houses in Arnoun village on January 7 claiming they were used by Hizbullah. Earlier, 16 uninhabited houses were destroyed in the same village.

While the monitors said the demolitions violated the cease-fire agreement, they added that "this conclusion does not validate the concerns and positions of the parties regarding the use of civilian property in military operations."

AP

Ashdod woman gets double-lung transplant

A 39-year-old Ashdod woman took a call at work on Wednesday and went straight to Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer to undergo a double lung transplant. The operation was successful and yesterday she was feeling fine.

The woman, married and with one child, suffered from tuberculosis as a child, which caused the gradual destruction of her lung tissue even though she had been cured of the TB. Despite her medical problems, she insisted on going to work.

Judy Siegel

Progressive Jews meet pope

ROME – Sir Sigmund Sternberg, president of the UK branch of the Union of Progressive Judaism, led a delegation of seven leading Reform and Liberal rabbis in a special audience with the pope on Wednesday. The group included Rabbis Sybil Sheridan and Jacqueline Tabick, who was ordained as the UK's first woman rabbi five years ago.

In an earlier meeting with the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, it was decided that a major conference of Catholic and Jewish world leaders would be called in London around 2000 on the theme of "The Theology of Partnership." Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, president of the commission, said that "the time has come to turn the good will of the past decades into a much fuller relationship."

Lisa Palmieri-Billig

Kuwait releases journalist who visited Israel

The Kuwaiti state prosecutor has released a local journalist on \$3,500 bail after state security had questioned him for three days over a visit to Israel, the daily *al-Sayassah* reported yesterday.

It said the prosecutor had accused journalist Hamid Buyanis of "direct communication with the Israeli enemy and harming Kuwaiti policy." Buyanis returned to Kuwait last month after conducting a series of interviews with top Israeli leaders. *Al-Sayassah* did not publish the interviews, however.

The visit by Buyanis to Israel triggered angry comment from the country's elected parliament and the Kuwait Journalists' Association, which is considering disciplinary measures against him.

Reuters

Civil guard volunteer dismissed

A volunteer from the Civil Guard in Kfar Sava received an immediate dismissal from his position after he visited Kalkilya while wearing his police uniform on Wednesday night. The man was picked up by Palestinian policemen who handed him over to Israel Police representatives. He reportedly told them that he had been going to Kalkilya to buy a gold coin.

Itim

Israel goes duck counting

Israel will participate tomorrow in an international effort to count waterfowl for an annual survey. The count will be taken by wardens of the Nature Protection and National Parks Authority and volunteers. Israel is the only country in the region taking part and its systematic collection of data over the years is considered particularly important.

In the last two years there has been a 17 percent drop in the number of waterfowl. The number of ducks dropped by 21,000 to 58,000 but the number of cormorants remained constant at 20,000. NPNPA officials said they hope the lack of rains this year has not affected the number of birds and the decrease last year was incidental.

Liat Collins

TAX

Continued from Page 1

Kaplan was not available for comment.

Until now, immigrants have been allowed to retain overseas assets tax-free for 30 years, as long as the income was kept overseas. Last May, that 30-year limit was abandoned, with former finance minister Yankov Neeman proposing a reform based on immediate taxation on overseas assets, whether held by immigrants or native Israelis.

Brown told the Jerusalem Post that ways must be found "to protect the interests of olim (immigrants), certainly on funds received before making aliyah," particularly for those immigrants living on fixed incomes and "especially retirees."

At the same time, the Knesset will ultimately determine the issue, added Brown. "There was no sympathy on either side for people who may be using the largesse of Israel toward olim for not doing what the law intends

them to do," he said.

Kohn said he views Netanyahu's letter as a positive development and detects "the lack of a positive response to the reform" from both the Prime Minister's Office and the Knesset. "It took the Prime Minister's Office to decide that this isn't a good piece of legislation," Kohn said.

North Americans are good taxpayers, said Kohn, referring to the AALI's 20,000 members, 40 percent of whom are over 60. From 2,000 to 3,000 North Americans immigrate each year, joining the 80,000 North Americans already living here, according to Kohn. The NIS 10 billion - 11b. tax reform was proposed by Neeman, and would abolish a host of tax exemptions, including those on assets held abroad by immigrants. The tax changes – which had a January 1 deadline – have already been approved on first reading and are currently awaiting approval by the Knesset Finance Committee.

In mid-November, Neeman accused American immigrants of tax evasion here and abroad.

Erekat: Sharon's remarks not positive

By BEN LYNNFIELD

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat yesterday said he saw nothing positive in Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon's statement that autonomy will lead to a Palestinian state, stressing that it was followed up immediately by a threat to annex parts of the West Bank.

"It's very realistic [of Sharon], but to finish by saying that there will be annexation? What the hell is that?" he asked. "That's like putting poison into water," Erekat said.

In an interview published Wednesday in *Le Monde*, Sharon said "autonomy will lead to a Palestinian state." He went on to warn that Israel would annex all parts of the West Bank under its control if the Palestinians make a unilateral declaration of statehood on May 4, 1999.

It was the first time Sharon was quoted as explicitly saying he could envision a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River. For many years he insisted that Jordan is the Palestinian state.

"The idea of a state is a reality to Sharon and Netanyahu," said Erekat. "But what we are concerned with is the size of the state. We hope the Israeli public will realize that this means the June 4, 1967 borders." In a related development, a poll due to be released today by the Nablus-based Center for Palestine Research and Studies points to a rise in the

number of Palestinians who support a unilateral declaration of statehood on May 4.

Fifty seven percent of the 1319 respondents said the PA should make the declaration even if Israel objects, while 36 percent said it would be better to wait for an agreement with Israel. Seven percent suggested other options or said they have no opinion. A similar poll, taken in November, showed 46 percent of respondents favoring a unilateral declaration. The margin of error for the survey was plus or minus 3%.

In an apparent bid to encourage support from the US, European community, and other key actors in the peace process, Palestinian Authority Minister for Jerusalem Faisal Husseini indicated at the Peres Peace Center earlier this week that the PA would reconsider announcing a state on May 4 if the international community offers it help in defending Palestinian interests against settlement expansion and other Israeli policies.

"We are in need of help from them to tell us an alternative," he said of the actors in the peace process.

It was one of the clearer pronouncements to date suggesting that the timing of the declaration of statehood, trumpeted last Fall with great fanfare by PA Chairman Yasser Arafat, is becoming increasingly negotiable in the eyes of some leaders.

Husseini's comments appeared

to be prompted by American, European community, and reportedly Egyptian pressure on the PA to postpone the statehood declaration until after the May 17 elections. Those actors, along with the Labor party, fear that a statehood declaration could boost support in the polling for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Husseini said the leading outside actors in the peace process – the US, Russia, the European community, Egypt, and Jordan – would be responsible for suggesting what the Palestinians would receive if they decide on a delay. But he added that the key current needs of the Palestinians are a curb on settlement activities by Israel, protection of their interests in Jerusalem, and the implementation of the Wye agreement and others signed with Israel.

In a related development, Andrei Azoulay, a Jewish adviser to Morocco's King Hassan, called on Israelis to stop debating whether or not there should be a Palestinian state and instead help it to develop. "The problem is that we Jews need to take the initiative to build the state with all its attributes to give it its dignity," he said. "It is our role to head this effort. To debate over whether it should exist or not is archaic." "I am a Jew amidst the Arab world," Azoulay continued. "The Arab world has chosen peace. Let us start with peace and build a relation that is different [than before]."

High security alert in capital for last Friday of Ramadan

By AMY KLEIN

Jerusalem police will be on high alert today throughout the Old City and east Jerusalem to prepare for the masses of worshippers expected at the Temple Mount-Haram al-Sharif on this last Friday of Ramadan.

Some 300,000 worshippers are expected, compared to about 200,000 last week. Prayers begin shortly after noon.

The sacred Moslem fasting month of Ramadan ends tomorrow, and as Friday is a Moslem holy day, today holds special significance for religious Moslems.

Though police have not received any specific threats, they will beef up security in order to protect the worshippers, said Shmuel Ben-Ruby, the police spokesman.

Thousands of police and border police will be stationed within and outside the Old City walls, Arab villages and checkpoints. Police will be on high alert to prevent any attempt to disrupt the prayers and the day's routine. Ben-Ruby said.

A police helicopter will also hover overhead to survey checkpoints and conduct searches.

Yesterday, police released some of the 28 Arabs detained on

Tuesday night for throwing stones and empty bottles at police and border police. Three of those detained were minors.

One policeman was lightly injured during the ruckus, which broke out in east Jerusalem late Tuesday night, when Moslems celebrated the revealing of the Koran, called Layl al-Kadr – the night of fate. Yesterday police released some of those detained, Ben-Ruby said.

This Sunday marks the beginning of Id al-Fitr or the Feast of the Fast-breaking, the three-day holiday celebrating the end of Ramadan.

OFER

Continued from Page 1

The Ofers, unlike Potash, have no intention of dissolving the Israel Corp., but rather proposes to make it a roof company for a substantial proportion of their business in Israel. General manager Yossi Rosen is also expected to be kept on.

"The Israel Corp. is not a stranger to us and will be very proud to continue its development," the Ofers said in a statement. "Similarly, we know and value Yossi Rosen, the general manager, and the other managers of the group of companies controlled by the Israel Corp. We have complete faith in them."

In July, Forbes estimated Sammy and Yuli Ofer's wealth at \$1.5 billion, up from \$1 billion the year before. It primarily listed the family's holdings abroad, real estate in London and New York, and the shipping business. The increase in the valuation stems from a leap in the value of their shares in the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, traded in the US at market cap of \$6 billion.

The foreign shipping activity is managed by Sammy Ofer and his sons, Yuli Ofer, 75, manages the businesses in Israel, primarily cargo shipping, real estate, and banking.

Forbes noted that Yuli Ofer is a philanthropist who donates \$3 million annually (among other causes, to naval commandos), and an art collector who does not hesitate to write a \$20 million check for a Picasso.

RAPE

Continued from Page 1

Shlomo had denied both charges. Shlomo, whose wife and three young children live in Israel, says that Abergil consented to the physical contact between them, but his lawyer Inbal Rubinstein said, but did not specify what that contact was. Italian police arrested him after Abergil filed a complaint, but released him due to lack of evidence after a week-long investigation, she added.

In her statement, Abergil identified the travel agent as Shlomo Nur. However, a Justice Ministry spokeswoman said his name was Uri Shlomo and that he sometimes used Nur as a first name.

Abergil, who had been working for a modelling agency in Milan, contacted Shlomo on October 5 to make arrangements to return to Netanya, she said in a statement

Shlomo told her that all of the flights to Israel from Milan were full and that she would have to travel to Rome to get a flight to Israel.

The following day, Shlomo told her that he could not find her a seat on a plane or train to Rome and offered to drive her in his car to Rome, which is eight hours away, she said.

"At a certain point in the journey, Nur stopped the car in a place which I do not know, and sat next to me in the back seat. He produced a knife, with which he threatened me, and raped me," Abergil said in her statement.

"Afterwards he tied me up, and then gagged my mouth with an adhesive tape, and tried to choke me with a rope and a plastic bag. I struggled with him with all my strength, and finally, when he did not succeed in choking me, he released me and asked me not to contact the police. I stayed calm, and promised him that everything

would be all right, and that I would not file a complaint against him.

"The attacker brought me back to Milan and from there I took a train to Rome," where she filed a complaint with police before returning to Israel, she said. She also filed a complaint with the Israel Police on October 15.

Italian police arrested Shlomo in Milan on October 12 on suspicion of rape. Italian news agencies reported. The case went before a preliminary judge, who freed him ruling Abergil had given her consent.

An appeals court overturned the decision and ordered him arrested again. Shlomo then appealed to the Court of Cassation, Italy's highest court, which has not yet made a final decision. No date has been reported for the ruling.

Abergil filed a request for a publication ban on the entire incident, which the Tel Aviv District Court granted.



Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon (left) and his French counterpart Hubert Vedrine arrive at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris yesterday.

(Reuters)

Palestinian state would have limited sovereignty – Sharon

PARIS (Reuters) – Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, whose visit to France has been overshadowed by his remark about the inevitability of a Palestinian state, said yesterday such a state would have only limited sovereignty.

"I came here to talk about security for the Jews but since everyone asks me this question (about a Palestinian state) again and again, I will have to answer," he told reporters after meeting Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine.

"What I want to underline is that what I was talking about was limited sovereignty. They can call it whatever they want but this political sovereignty will be obtained solely by negotiations and not by a unilateral declaration," he said.

Speaking before the Institute for Foreign Relations (IFRI), a think-tank, he also gave detailed thoughts on the geographical outline of two buffer zones, he believes would have to exist on either side of the West Bank.

Sharon also said Israel would maintain security powers in the

new state's air and seaports and in its air space.

"One should not use the term state in the usual concept that one uses when talking of states," said Sharon.

Sharon sought to distance himself from Shimon Peres who, he said, told Israeli newspapers yesterday that their positions were now close.

"There are major differences between mine and Mr. Peres's positions," he said. "He speaks enthusiastically about a Palestinian state, while I speak of a limited sovereignty. Unfortunately, when I head Peres's opinions it sounds to me like he is representing the Palestinians, whereas I am representing the Jewish state."

The numerous conditions he set, prompted verbal sparring with Arab journalists based in Paris, to whom he said: "What you should do is advise the Palestinians not to waste time but to begin negotiating with us."

Danna Harman contributed to this report.



Hail to the chief

Members of Syria's People's Assembly (parliament) give a standing ovation in Damascus yesterday following the approval of President Hafez Assad's nomination for a fifth seven-year term.

(Reuters)

Seychelles.

Liba'i categorically denied rumors that Abergil had been raped by one of the judges of the Miss World contest and was awarded the title as compensation.

"I wish to dispel – once and for all – the wave of offensive rumors and gossip which has swept over my relatives and myself since I won the competition and returned to Israel," Abergil said. "I won the Miss World award by right, not by suffrage."

Now that Shlomo has been arrested, there is no longer a reason to continue upholding the ban, Abergil's lawyer, former justice minister David Liba'i, said in asking the court to lift the ban. This is especially true since there have been extensive reports on the incident abroad, leading to widespread rumors here, he added.

The foreign media reported the incident extensively, and Yediot Aharonot hinted at the crime in a television review of Abergil's triumphant return home to Israel following her victory in the Miss World pageant on November 26 in

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DRIVE CAREFULLY

هكذا من الأصل

Knesset panel fails to curb erotic phone services

By JUDY SEGAL

The Communications Ministry and Israel Consumer Council (ICC) are furious over the fourth fruitless meeting in a year by the Knesset Economics Committee on erotic phone call services.

The meeting this week, attended only by committee chairman Amnon Rubinstein and Meir Shear, ended with the two asking the Communications Ministry to present information about how such services are organized and supervised in the European Union at the next session.

The handful of licensed, legitimate information suppliers over 057 phone lines have been lobbying against the ministry's efforts to shut down the service except for those who ask to subscribe to them.

Originally, 056 phone lines were set aside for erotic call services, and access was blocked except to Bezeq subscribers who asked for them in writing. The 057 numbers were to be available only to suppliers of legitimate services, such as advice on the stock market, health, astrology, and computers. But the erotic phone call services applied for 057 licenses under the guise of providing respectable information for a fee.

According to a ministry official, there are now 400 or so 057 lines, most of them erotic call services. Since the price of a license is only NIS 2,000, erotic call companies obtained dozens of lines apiece using different names.

MKS began receiving many complaints from people who

received Bezeq bills of hundreds of thousands, and even tens of thousands of shekels after members of their own family, or people who happened to be in their home or office, made the calls. The bills had to be paid, unless it could be proven that someone had cut into their phone line illegally.

The National Council for the Child and the ICC complained to the committee about abuse of children from the erotic phone services and families who went into debt because of high bills for a service of which they were unaware. The ministry demanded that 057 be made off limits except to those who actually requested it. As for legitimate providers, the ICC said they could use an ordinary phone line and be paid by credit card or have subscribers key in a code number and be billed later.

ICC chairman Ariella Ravdel-Neidkov said yesterday that she is sorry for the legitimate providers, but the open 057 lines are causing great harm to hundreds or even thousands of people. "Having such lines open, making Bezeq subscribers a captive audience, is an anomaly. People who want erotic call services should have to ask to be hooked up," she said.

The ministry official said it lacks the manpower to monitor service providers, who routinely change offices and numbers to avoid getting caught. In any case, complaints to the police were rarely dealt with, and existing laws prevent the ministry from telling Bezeq to shut down lines immediately when violators are caught.

Abergil: Victims should step forward

Beauty queen lauded for revealing painful rape account

By HEIDI J. GLETT

Miss World Linor Abergil encouraged rape victims to press charges against their attackers, in a statement she released yesterday detailing her allegations that Uri Shlomo raped her.

"I am not ashamed of the incident. I did not cause it, and I never imagined that I would encounter such an awful situation," she declared.

"I felt I must file a claim with the police and make this announcement, so as to serve as an example for many women," she said, going on to emphasize that women should consider any assault — sexual or otherwise — unacceptable.

Women who are assaulted "must react to the crime performed against them, even at the price of some public exposure, so that these incidents do not become an accepted, routine part of our lives," she said.

Though Abergil says she was raped in October, details of the incident were not made public until yesterday, when Tel Aviv District Court rescinded a publication ban.

"Despite the tremendous difficulty entailed in describing the details of the terrible incident which I underwent, I found it appropriate to turn to the court and to request, even so, to remove the press immunity so that I can issue this announcement and so that the Israeli public can understand what happened," she said.

Noga Shiloah, director of the Jerusalem Rape Crisis Center, lauded Abergil for coming forward.

"Here in the center we're very proud of what she said and all the courage that she showed in her statement," Shiloah said. "I think this can show a change in our



Uri Shlomo, accused of raping Linor Abergil, Miss World, hides his face in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday.

(Israel Sun)

society and how women see themselves as rape victims.

"I hope this will lead a lot of (rape victims) to call the center and ask for help instead of feeling guilty. She's Miss World and this means a lot to women around the world who admire her for that [and so such a statement] has a lot of public importance."

While coming forward to press charges can be difficult and frustrating, Shiloah said, doing so also "can help empower women"

after the trauma they suffered. She said that she hopes all rape victims will call the center's hot line for help at 1202 and "we'll do all we can to put the men in jail."

Lat Collins adds
MK Dalia Itzik (Labor) issued a statement praising Abergil for her courage and set she had set a wonderful example of how to behave. Itzik called on all women who have been attacked to follow her example and file complaints with the police.

Gang rape trial opens

The trial of the six youths, two of them brothers, accused of gang-raping a Ramat Hasharon teenager opened in Tel Aviv District Court yesterday. The youths pleaded not guilty, insisting the girl had consented to have sex with them.

The trial is being held behind closed doors, as all the defendants are minors. The judge recently released three of the defendants to house arrest; the other three are to remain in custody until the conclusion of the trial.

tim

Reno: We're willing to hear Pollard's representatives

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — The US Justice Department would be willing to meet with representatives of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard as it considers whether he should get clemency, Attorney General Janet Reno said yesterday.

The Justice Department, which has adamantly opposed Pollard's release from prison, has yet to submit its recommendation to President Bill Clinton, but Reno vowed to complete the process as quickly as possible.

The plea for a meeting first surfaced in a letter to the White House from Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, World Jewish Congress president Edgar Bronfman, and Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz.

Justice Department officials

said it is not clear who would state the case on Pollard's behalf.

Pollard pleaded guilty and was sentenced to life in prison in 1986 for passing secret US documents to Israel while working as a US Navy intelligence analyst. Clinton promised to review Pollard's case in October during the closing negotiations at the Wye Plantation in Maryland.

"We would be willing to hear from Mr. Pollard's representatives," Reno said, adding that they could meet with Justice Department officials. "We just want to make sure that [the process] is as thorough and as comprehensive as possible," she told the weekly Justice Department news briefing.

But other officials said last week that FBI Director Louis Freeh and officials from the Justice

Department's criminal division strongly oppose any early release from prison for Pollard.

Asked if she would be swayed by the opposition to Pollard's release from the State and Defense Departments and the CIA, Reno said the White House has recommended that she focus on the Justice Department and not cover other agencies.

Sixty senators on Wednesday urged Clinton to keep Pollard in prison, saying "any grant of clemency would now be viewed as an acquiescence to external political pressures." White House officials have cautioned against any decision soon, saying it could be two weeks before all the recommendations have been received and that it could take months before Clinton decides the case.

Poland wants inclusion in slave-labor talks

By MARILYN HENRY

Poland is bristling because Germany is planning intensive talks with Israeli, American and Jewish leaders regarding compensation for Nazi victims who were forced to work as slave laborers, but has not included Warsaw.

Germany should have included Poland in talks on establishing a fund for former Nazi slave laborers, Polish Deputy Foreign

Minister Janusz Stanczyk told his parliament Tuesday.

More than 2.5 million Poles were among the 7 million prisoners forced into labor by the Nazis.

"Our forced labor concerns should go east," said one German Foreign Ministry official, who declined to be identified. "But we are looking west," he said, referring to lawsuits filed in the US seeking compensation from German banks and industrial concerns that profited

from slave labor.

An aide to German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, Bodo Hombach, will travel to the US and Israel this month to discuss the structure of a German fund to compensate forced laborers.

Volkswagen and Siemens recently established funds of DM 20 million each to aid former slave laborers.

Some Jewish slave laborers received modest payments from

some industrial firms after the war, but Christian victims in the East have never received comparable compensation, and argue that they should be paid like those in the West.

Some 20,000 Polish slave laborers plan to file suit against Germany for more than \$1 billion in compensation in the next few weeks, and anticipate bringing suits against Austria as well, the Associated Press reported.

German media giant begins probe into wartime past

BERLIN (Reuters) — German media giant Bertelsmann AG said yesterday it had launched a probe into its activities during the Nazi era in response to charges it published propaganda for Adolf Hitler's regime.

Bertelsmann, which in the past insisted it had actively opposed

Nazi rule in the 1930s and 1940s, came under fire last month when an independent researcher announced his findings that the company had published texts supporting Hitler's war effort.

The company said in a statement a team of independent academics, led by US-Israeli historian

Saul Friedlaender, had started the investigation.

"Chairman Thomas Middelhoff has guaranteed the commission absolute independence for its researchers as well as his complete personal support, as well as that of the shareholders and the

entire company," the company said in a statement.

"The commission will have unlimited access to all relevant files and can present its findings to the public without Bertelsmann's interference," it added.

Jewish philanthropist Zalman Chaim Bernstein, 72

A benefactor to countless causes in Israel and abroad

Zalman Chaim Bernstein, philanthropist and innovative businessman, died on January 6 of cancer at the age of seventy-two. Zalman made his reputation as an iconoclastic broker, who defied pundits in transforming his private investment firm, Sanford C. Bernstein & Co., into the largest of its kind on Wall Street with over \$80 billion invested worldwide.

Despite his extraordinary financial success, Zalman viewed his countless philanthropic endeavors in Israel and abroad as his most enduring legacy. Indeed, in his later years he would insist that his greatest challenge was to determine how best to spend, rather than make, money.

Friends and colleagues knew Zalman as a man of indomitable will — a blunt-talking, cigar-smoking businessman who made every waking minute count. His uncompromising demand for excellence intimidated the untutored, yet his friends understood that behind the growl was a man of humor, compassion, and above all scrupulous honesty.

As a business and philanthropic leader, he displayed an unusual combination of qualities: meticulous attention to detail, together with exceptional vision and devotion to research — alongside a penchant to trust his instincts.

His associates at work, Zalman was intensely loyal, extraordinarily generous, attentive to the opinions of others, and quick to acknowledge mistakes.

Unlike his remarkable business ascent, Zalman's journey as a Jew was more circuitous. He grew up in a New York City home nominally connected to Judaism. However, after his father's death, he began to explore Judaism and eventually committed himself



Zalman Chaim Bernstein

(Karen Ben-Zion)

fully to traditional observance. In 1989 he made aliyah, set up residence in Jerusalem, and energetically tackled the challenges of Israel as a Jewish state.

Compared to the flair and hubris that characterized his business, Zalman worked quietly in Israel and the Jewish world. He established and endowed two foundations: The Tikvah Fund to nurture economic development in Israel, and Avi Chai to promote mutual understanding among Jews of different religious orientations

and to encourage greater commitment to Jewish life.

He also played an instrumental role as trustee of the Shalem Center, an institute for research on Jewish public policy and national thought. In addition to these main philanthropic interests, Zalman was a generous, often anonymous, benefactor to countless other Jewish causes in Israel and abroad.

If any one institution best reflected Zalman's dreams — and in particular his abiding devotion to the Jewish people — it was Avi Chai. He established the foundation in 1984 to promote the vision of a Jewish people committed to Jewish life, yet able to embrace a broad spectrum of views.

True to his vision and modus operandi, he built a foundation bound to the highest performance standards, driven by a board and staff of strong-minded, diverse individuals (Zalman was especially proud that the board had no qualms in voting against his wishes, and often did) and committed to developing and backing innovative, educational programs to further his mission in Israel and North America.

Zalman is survived by his wife,

Mem, mother, brother, three children, and three grandchildren. His death leaves the Jewish people bereft of a man of extraordinary

vision and deed. May his memory — and his manifold legacy — continue to be a blessing.

Eli Silver

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The vision thing

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

It was a name-droppers paradise at the Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv this week. Genuine tourists were thin on the ground, but the few that were wandering around seemed somewhat taken aback to find themselves bumping into Mikhail Gorbachev or former Egyptian prime minister Mustafa Khalil on the way to breakfast. One open-mouthed man, walking backwards while watching Archbishop Desmond Tutu make a grand entrance into the lobby, nearly propelled himself and Henry Kissinger down the stairs. Amid all the jostling, the elder statesman barely noticed.

What was really astonishing was that all these extremely busy and powerful people were here at all. Like myself, several other veteran journalists confessed they had been taken completely by surprise by the overwhelming response to the calling of the governors' meeting for the year-old Peres Center for Peace.

An Israeli politician confided that the event had infuriated the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, which does not like being cut out of the loop when 350 high-ranking foreigners pour into the country. That may have explained why protocol and security levels were so refreshingly low, even with 150 Arab delegates.

Panel beaters
The Peres Center for Peace is not political, its focus is economic, insists founder Shimon Peres, and the center certainly has no lack of funds. "Its focus is egotistical," whispered a cynical reporter. Both statements are true.

The program was impressive by any standards, considering it could have been a mere board meeting - blah blah, yadda yadda. But the meeting of the governors was cleared out of the way on the first day, and the center announced \$60 million worth of joint Israeli-Palestinian initiatives to underpin the peace process.

The second day was visits and lectures, and it was on the third day, through working seminars led by talented panelists, that we got a glimpse of the practical hard work of the Peres Center. A panel on the financial mechanisms of peace agreements included a former president of Cyprus, a corporate CEO from Argentina, a Norwegian diplomat, and senior Americans, Israelis, and Palestinians. One on mediation and negotiating strategies included the head of Jordan's royal court, US envoy Dennis Ross, Miguel Moratinos from the European Union, former ambassador to the US Itamar Rabinovich, and Palestinian Legislative Council Ahmed Qurei.

Thin ladies sing
Panels on reconciliation and implementation had representatives from Norway, Israel, Spain, Switzerland, the US, the Palestinian Authority, Morocco, Tunisia, Costa Rica, and France - as well as South Africa's F.W. de Klerk and Egypt's Khaili. In the other panels, interna-

tional experts from Ireland to Bosnia and the World Bank tackled how to bring agriculture, health care, youth leadership, international support, and advanced technology to bear on peace processes. As for that "ego focus," it cannot be denied that even if Peres cannot win elections, some very impressive international luminaries are very fond indeed of him and his center. His vision of a New Middle East, much derided in certain Israeli circles, is very much alive among these pragmatic philosophers of a future world.

Because of the crowds drawn by keynote speakers like Tutu, Gorbachev, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa, Kissinger, Qurei, and Peres himself, this event was held in the auditorium of Tel Aviv's beautiful new Opera Center, next door to the museum. No fat lady sang - but Ahinoam Nini and Amal Murkus did sing a trilingual duet, "Imagine."

Sitting in the opulent luxury of these marbled halls, waiting for the events to begin, it seemed appropriate to ponder the gap between grand vision and the humdrum facts of daily life. When the multi-million-dollar opera house was being built, it was said to be an extravagant monument to the ego of mayor Shlomo Lahat.

Peres people
Maybe it was, maybe more drains and parking lots would have made our lives easier. But it is hard not to feel proud of a city that can boast such a magnificent cultural center. Vision does win out, hands down, over drains sometimes.

The opening of the Peres Center was just as glittering in 1997, many of the same faces were there, Egypt's Amr Moussa delivered the same impassioned plea for the Israeli government to seize the vision and take Palestinian and Arab aspirations seriously. "An Israeli peace will not work, just as an Arab peace will not work."

We wondered then if the center would fizzle, just as the founder's election effort had. It hasn't, so maybe the New Middle East is still alive too.

Yes, it is easy to carp and sneer at visionaries, until one day you find yourself astonished by a new Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, or a new opera house in Tel Aviv. One day we may be astonished by Arab oil sheiks coming to the Tel Aviv opera in the center of the New Middle East, and why not?

But this week, mingling with the people who dismantled communism and apartheid, and those who negotiated world peace treaties and won Nobel prizes, those who are still creating rather than destroying, it was hard not to feel proud to have them here in little Israel.

It was hard not to feel proud that we have a Shimon Peres, and a Peres Peace Center, and that, after everything, all his visionary international friends who followed their own dreams still have faith in what Shimon's people might achieve.

Euro parliament raps commission

By GILLIAN HANDYSIDE

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European parliament was licking its self-inflicted wounds yesterday after picking a fight with the powerful European Commission then backing down under pressure from member states to avert a crisis.

"This is a massive climbdown by the Socialists in the face of overwhelming evidence of nepotism, corruption, mismanagement and fraud in the European Commission," said British Conservative Edward MacMillan-Scott.

"Pauline Green and her Socialist group have today voted for a whitewash of Euro fraud... They have failed in their duty as parliamentarians to make the European Commission politically and publicly accountable," he added in a statement.

Other deputies hailed parliament's successful demands for an independent inquiry into alleged commission fraud and mismanagement saying this showed the assembly was slowly coming of age.

"In a couple of decades people will look back and say that was the moment when parliament exerted itself," said Green, of the dominant Socialist bloc which launched then defused the ill-fated row in a strategy which she admitted went awry.

Parliament had given the commission... "a good kick in the backside," Green told reporters.

Hamstrung by an all-or-nothing rule, parliament faced the stark choice of firing the entire 20-member commission or giving it a qualified endorsement and a rap on the knuckles.

It opted for the latter, obtaining the pledge of an independent inquiry and effectively putting the commission on probation until March 15, when the results of the probe are to be delivered.

But smaller parties which insisted on going ahead with a censure vote even after the Socialists had announced they would not back it, made a surprising showing, gaining 232 votes for censure versus 293 against, or 44 percent of



European Commission President Jacques Santer listens to reporters' questions in Strasbourg yesterday after a motion of censure was supported by 40% of the parliament deputies. (AP)

deputies voting.

"This was the best result for a motion of censure ever achieved in the European parliament, said one of its supporters.

"It was a moral victory for us," said Irish liberal Patrick Cox. "It was a moral defeat for the Socialist group." Cox denounced the Socialists' maneuvering to prop up the discredited commission and said they would have to answer to voters for their action come election time in June.

But he said the whole exercise marked a significant phase in the

maturing of democratic accountability in Europe, even if it had been something of a "crablike step forward."

Deputies said the anti-climatic outcome of the drama marked the start of a new culture and an end to the arrogance of the unelected commission, which is responsible for putting European Union policy into practice.

But some conceded that the parliament had been weakened by a whimpering compromise while hardliners said the commission had suffered a fatal blow to com-

mission president Jacques Santer and his lieutenants.

"This is a blatant slap in the face for Santer and his team."

The commission is a dead man walking. Although Santer formally survived the vote, he now heads a zombie commission, the radical Greens group said in a statement.

In what may have been a gesture to public opinion at home, German Social Democrats broke ranks with their Socialist colleagues to vote against the commission, which has been widely criticized in the German media.

"The great majority of German Social-Democrat MPs has voted against the commission because we think it is not able to carry out its promise of reform," said Klaus Haensch, reflecting serious criticism of the commission in some German media.

But Germany's Social Democrat Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, alarmed at the turn of events as his country takes on the EU presidency for six crucial months, was himself instrumental in averting the sacking of the commission in the run up to yesterday's vote.

Russia to triple number of nuclear experts in Iran

By ADAM TANNER

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Fresh US accusations that Moscow is helping Tehran build nuclear weapons and missiles have flared at a time when Russia plans to more than triple its staff of nuclear workers in Iran, an official said yesterday.

A spokesman for the Atomic Energy Ministry told Reuters Russia will increase its staff at the site of the Bushehr civilian nuclear reactor in Iran over the next few months to 1,000 people from about 300 now.

Earlier this week the United States imposed sanctions against three Russian research institutes it accused of aiding Iran's nuclear and missile weapons programs. Washington has warned of other measures if Russia does not curb what it says are exports of dangerous technologies.

Russian experts are building a 1,000 megawatt light-water nuclear reactor at Bushehr.

Moscow and Tehran have repeatedly said the plant's only purpose is generating electricity, but Washington has said that it is convinced Iran is using the reactor as a cover to acquire sensitive Russian nuclear technology.

"We are increasing the number of workers there in the coming months," Atomic Energy Ministry spokesman Yuri Besspalov said.

"There will be about 1,000 Russian workers there." He said most of the 300 already in Bushehr were construction workers and the increase was aimed at helping to meet the construction deadline.

The US told Russia on Wednesday that it must stop cooperating with Iran's nuclear and missile programmes or face curbs on its lucrative space launches of US satellites that would take effect in 2000. The first unit is scheduled to be finished by May 2003.

Last week Atomic Energy Minister Yevgeny Adamov said the first reactor at Bushehr was between 30 and 40 percent complete at a cost so far of about \$100 million.

During a visit by Adamov to Tehran in November, Iran asked Russia to prepare a study of the feasibility of building three more nuclear reactors at Bushehr. Adamov said the additional reactors would cost between \$3 and \$4.5 billion which he said was cheaper than Western models.

The three Russian research institutes hit with US sanctions this week join seven entities on which Washington slapped sanctions last July, just days after Iran test-fired a 1,300 km. range missile capable of hitting Israel and other US allies.

Russia has strongly denied that the three institutes named this week were helping Iran and said sanctions imposed by Washington could hurt bilateral relations.

Iran rejected the US charges as "repetitious," Tehran Radio reported yesterday.

It quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi as condemning the charges, saying it was "Iran's natural right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes."

Asefi said Iran's missile program was self-sufficient and did not rely on other countries.

"Iran has never been seeking nuclear arms and its military capacities are exclusively defensive and have a deterrent function," the radio quoted Asefi as saying on Wednesday.

Tehran Radio said in a commentary the US had provided no evidence backing its allegations.

It said relations between Iran and Russia were "totally transparent" and in accordance with international regulations.

The daily *Tehran Times* accused the US of blackmailing Iran on behalf of Israel. "The tactics of putting pressure on North Korea, Russia or China should be stopped in the case of Iran, as time and again international inspectors have visited Iran and certified that Iran's nuclear plans are for peaceful purposes," the *Tehran Times* said.

Freed hostage reunites with family

By PAUL MAJENDIE

LONDON (Reuters) - British oil worker John Brooke, 46, said yesterday he was well treated by the Yemeni tribesmen who took him hostage - but he would never be returning to the desert republic.

Returning to Britain for a joyful reunion with his wife Kathy after his five-day kidnap ordeal, Brooke quipped to reporters: "I am not going camping again."

Looking relaxed and relieved at an airport news conference, Brooke would not go into any details about his release or whether a ransom had been paid by his oil company employers or the Yemeni government.

"I was treated very well after the initial confrontation," he said.

Brooke, who had worked for 12 years in Yemen, said he was seized by nine armed tribesmen who kept moving him from one hideout to another in the desert every six or seven hours.

Brooke was kidnapped only two weeks after four Western hostages died in a shootout between militant Islamists and government forces. Yemen have since charged three Islamic militants with kidnapping and premeditated murder in the abduction of the 16 Western tourists.

The prosecution has demanded the death penalty for them.

Brooke said he never felt his life was in danger, "unless something



Freed hostage John Brooke smiles after being reunited with his wife Kathy yesterday. (Reuters)

suddenly happened that would make them do something foolish."

His wife Kathy, reliving her nightmare ordeal of waiting and hoping back home, said: "... there were times I just wanted to scream the house down. I haven't been able to sleep... I suppose I have had more conversations with God in the past few days than I have had in a lifetime."

Brooke said his days in Yemen with the US oilfield services firm Halliburton Co. were now over.

"I am not going back. If I was single, I might go back but I am not, so I wouldn't go back," he said. His

wife nodded approvingly and said:

"It was entirely John's decision." Brooke said he was approached by an armed tribesman while taking his daily evening walk at a secure compound. "He pulled a pistol on me and grabbed me," he said. "I tried to escape but obviously was overpowered."

He was quick to open a dialogue with his kidnappers and said: "he bore no animosity toward them: 'You want to make friends with your captors, or so I am told.'"

"You never think it is going to happen to you," he said, after the end of his ordeal.

Malaysia's Anwar blasts judge's sodomy decision

By K. BARANESE KRISHNAAN

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) - Malaysia's sacked finance minister Anwar Ibrahim yesterday denounced a decision by the judge in his trial to throw out evidence his lawyers said proved he did not commit sodomy and adultery.

Judge Augustine Paul dealt a severe setback to Anwar, ruling that evidence relating to sexual misconduct and sodomy introduced during two-and-a-half months of testimony in his sex and corruption trial is now irrelevant.

Anwar's lawyers said they could no longer argue that to defend his honor, the former prime-minister-in-waiting was justified in 1997 in getting two people who accused him of sex crimes to retract their allegations.

They said the judge's ruling would make it more difficult for Anwar to prove his argument that he was the victim of a plot by associates of his former mentor, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Anwar told reporters he is disgusted with the judge's decision that the High Court is now concerned only with whether he abused his power to obtain retractions from his accusers and not whether the accusations are false.

"They abused me for two months

and now I can't say anything," Anwar told reporters. "This is Mahathir's justice."

Anwar's wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, said she was disappointed.

"It does seem to me my husband is now disabled from denying the vile, baseless, and false allegations made in court and which had been given wide publicity throughout the world."

The judge made his controversial decision just as Anwar's lawyers were about to sum up their arguments on the four corruption charges against the former minister, after hearing testimony from the prosecution witnesses in the case.

Prosecutors say Anwar broke the corruption statute by ordering police to coerce retractions from his accusers.

Augustine said his ruling to "disregard the truth or falsity" of the sex accusations was based on his acceptance on Wednesday of amendments to the corruption charges brought by the prosecution.

Defense lawyers said that with the amendments, the government had lowered its burden of proof as it no longer had to prove sexual misconduct and sodomy on Anwar's part to convict him of corruption.

The four charges being examined now in the High Court are part of five corruption counts and

another five charges of sodomy facing Anwar.

The sacked politician said yesterday they were "all trumped-up and fabricated" charges.

"They have achieved their aim to smear me through the local media, so now they amend the charges," he said.

Opposition politicians and rights groups blasted Attorney-General Mohar Abdullah, whose prosecution team brought the charges.

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang called on Mohar to withdraw the charges and publicly apologize for "deviating from the traditional prosecutorial standards and causing a manifest injustice."

The People's Democratic Alliance, a rights group, said Mohar must take responsibility for injuries Anwar suffered in police custody, and demanded that he resign.

Augustine, who appeared almost contrite for his decision to throw out the sex evidence, adjourned the trial until January 26, granting Anwar's lawyers time to recraft their arguments.

The Court of Appeals in the capital is expected to rule tomorrow on Anwar's appeal against Augustine's decision to deny him bail.

Anwar has been in detention since he was arrested on September 20.

Shaare Zedek Medical Center, Jerusalem
Board of Directors
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Management and Staff
deeply mourn the death of

MOSES J. GRUNDWERG

Member of our International Board of Governors, esteemed friend and supporter, who so generously volunteered his talented professional services to Shaare Zedek Medical Center, Jerusalem.

Sincerest condolences to his loving family.

חברים יקרים אנחנו בתוך סדר אבלי ציון וירושלים

The family in Israel mourn the loss of

MOSES (Moe) J. GRUNDWERG ז"ל

Brother of Saul, father of Matthew, Sammy and Sylvia

Burial took place in Miami, Florida.

Shiva at Saul & Sandy Grundweg, 10175 Collins Ave., Bal Harbour, Florida

On the second *yahrzeit* of our beloved

PHYLLIS RIVKA HACKETT ז"ל

a memorial service will be held next Friday,

January 22, 1999 (5 Shvat) at Har Hamenuhot,

Jerusalem (Har Tamir, Gush Lamed Bet) at 10:30 a.m.

Hackett, Gaba and Abrahams families

To commemorate the 9th *yahrzeit* of

Rabbi BINYAMIN STEPANSKY

we will meet at the Har Hamenuhot main parking area on Sunday, January 17, 1999 at 3:30 p.m.

The Family

To Michal, Shulamit and the Family

I am with you in your time of sorrow and
mourn with you the passing of

KURT MOSHE HEINBERG

Fondest love,
Linda Givon

US: Iraq can sell all its oil for food

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The US proposed yesterday to the UN Security Council that Iraq be allowed to sell as much oil as it wants to purchase food and medicine for its people, a US official said.

"We'll be talking with our allies in the Security Council about eliminating the ceiling on funds from [Iraqi] oil exports which can be used for food and medicine," said a senior Clinton administration official.

Other officials said the US proposal was made to other members of the Security Council at UN headquarters in New York during closed-door consultations.

Iraq now is allowed to sell \$5.25 billion every six months to buy food, medicine, and other supplies under a tightly controlled program.

But it is only able to sell about \$3 billion in that time frame because of its dilapidated oil industry and low oil prices.

That means Iraq would probably not be able to ship any more oil than it does now unless Iraq can buy enough spare parts and equipment for Baghdad's oil industry to increase output.

The official said Washington was making the proposal to take away Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's ability "to use the welfare of his own people to gain sympathy."

"It's clear we feel more about his people than he does," the official said. "We have no problem if the Iraqi people need more food and medicine. We're all for looking at ways to get them that."

The proposal comes in the face of a French proposal to lift the oil embargo on Iraq out of concern that it has become the "wrong tool" to achieve UN goals in Iraq.

The French proposal on Wednesday said the oil embargo could no longer be defended because "it hurts the people of Iraq and

keeps them hostages of their authorities."

The official said the US also wanted to streamline the process used by the United Nations to approve what items the Iraqis can buy. The current process can get bogged down in haggling over what constitutes products that have a dual civilian and military use.

National Security Council spokesman David Leavy refused to discuss the specifics of the US proposals, saying only, "The United States is determined to work with our friends and allies in the region and on the Security Council to assist the Iraqi people. Our problem is with Saddam Hussein's regime, the same regime that has neglected the needs of the Iraqi population for many years."

The US has been engaged in several confrontations with Iraq since a four day bombing campaign in mid-December by US and British warplanes over Iraq's refusal to

cooperate with UN weapons inspectors.

US fighter jets attacked Iraqi air defense systems yesterday for the fourth consecutive day in the northern no-fly zone, a Pentagon spokesman said.

US Defense Department spokesman Lt. Col. Steve Campbell said an F-16 conducting a mid-morning routine patrol in northern Iraq fired a High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM) after the jet was tracked by Iraqi radar.

In a separate incident, an F-15 warplane dropped a precision-guided missile on a suspected surface-to-air missile system. Both incidents occurred north-west of the city of Mosul.

There was no damage to coalition aircraft or crews and they all returned safely to base in Incirlik, Turkey, Campbell added. Damage was being assessed to Iraqi forces, he added.

Gore focuses on 2000 campaign

By THOMAS FERRARO

Washington (Reuters) - Vice President Al Gore announced another of his administration initiatives for the next century yesterday as President Bill Clinton tried to hold on to his job for the rest of this century.

The contrasting focuses of Clinton and Gore underscored the different political tracks the two suddenly are traveling.

Clinton is seeking to avoid a Senate impeachment conviction that would drive him from office while Gore is busy positioning himself to be elected his successor next year.

In the past seven days alone, Gore, front-runner for the 2000 Democratic presidential nomination, has:

- Gone to Iowa to announce that hog farmers will get \$50 million in direct cash payments, and to say another \$80 million will be spent to help eradicate a hog disease and reduce an oversupply of the live stock.
- Announced the administration is proposing a new financing tool that would generate \$9.5 billion in bond authority for investments by state and local governments in a cleaner environment and open space.
- Announced the administration is proposing \$8.3 billion to ease traffic congestion and improve public transit.
- Hosted a national jobs summit where he unveiled a \$60 million administration plan, plus a variety of tax breaks, to better educate needed high-skilled workers.
- Said the administration will ask Congress for an additional \$1.6 billion in grants to help pump new life and development into 20 selected



Hindu ritual

A sadhu, or holy man, worships at the sea at Gangasagar, south of Calcutta, yesterday. About three million pilgrims gathered for the holy dipping ritual from all over India and Nepal. Meanwhile, at least 40 people were killed and more than 100 injured in southern India when a portion of a hillock caved in when the pilgrims were watching a ritual lighting of lamps at the pilgrimage center of Pamba, some 150 km from Trivandrum, capital of the state of Kerala. (AP)

Russian government approves bill against political extremism

MOSCOW (AP) - The Russian cabinet yesterday approved a draft bill that would outlaw statements fuelling ethnic strife or calling for the violent overthrow of the government.

The bill comes following a series of anti-Semitic remarks by Communist Party members that caused an uproar in Russia and abroad.

Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov told the cabinet that anti-Semitic statements, as well as those directed at other ethnic groups, must "not be only condemned by society, but be punishable by law."

"Political extremism must be absolutely excluded from political life, as it undermines society," he said.

Justice Minister Pavel Krasheninnikov said the new bill seeks to make political parties responsible for members who make extremist statements. A party must either disavow

such statements made by members, or face an official ban.

Last fall, the Communist Party was slow to condemn anti-Semitic statements by Albert Makashov, a member of parliament. It did so only grudgingly, following a wave of protests in Russia and abroad. A few weeks later, another Communist lawmaker made similar statements.

The current Russian law is vague on the issue, and the authorities have taken no legal action against the Communists.

The new bill must be approved by President Boris Yeltsin before being sent to parliament. The Communist-dominated lower house, the State Duma, is expected to oppose the bill in its current form.

Yeltsin's spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin said yesterday that the president plans to chair a session of his Security Council later this month, to consider ways to ban political extremism.

Sierra Leone's rebels agree to cease-fire, official says

By GLENN MCKENZIE

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) - Sierra Leone's rebels have agreed to a cease-fire in the civil war that has ravaged the impoverished West African country, a rebel official said yesterday.

Martin Coker, an aide to rebel commander Gen. Sam Bockarie, declined to give details. He was reached by telephone in an undisclosed location in Sierra Leone.

The cease-fire was set to start tomorrow at 8 pm Israel time. Officials in the government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah could not be reached for comment.

Liberian President Charles Taylor said his government brokered the accord. He did not indicate, however, whether troops defending Kabbah's government, including the Nigerian-led West African intervention force known as ECOMOG, agreed to the truce.

"We believe this is a very important development after two days of very stringent negotiations with the Liberian government," Taylor told reporters in the Liberian capital, Monrovia.

In Rome, a spokesman for the Roman Catholic news agency MISNA said the rebels told church

officials they would release Freetown's archbishop, Monsignor Joseph Henry Ganda, in exchange for a ceasefire.

Ganda was seized earlier this week and held along with an Italian priest, the Rev. Mario Guerra, who was abducted in November.

An earlier cease-fire plan collapsed last week after rebel field commanders rejected the proposal, demanding that the rebels be freed. Sankoh, founder of Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front rebel alliance, and Kabbah reportedly agreed to the proposal.

Sankoh has been imprisoned in a secret location since October, when a court in the capital, Freetown, convicted him of treason and mass murder. Although he has no daily control over the rebels, he remains their inspiration.

If both sides lay down their arms, it would end a round of fighting that began in December, when the rebel Revolutionary United Front launched a series of lightning attacks against towns and cities, shooting their way into Freetown earlier this month.

The upsurge of fighting has uprooted hundreds of thousands of people.

WORLD

in brief

Yeltsin misses year's first day in Kremlin

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian President Boris Yeltsin yesterday failed to show up at the Kremlin for his first day in the office this year, but his spokesman said he was feeling fine and working at a residence outside Moscow. Dmitry Yakushkin told Reuters Yeltsin had cancelled meetings scheduled yesterday and today, but declined to give a reason. "The schedule has changed, and that's it," he said. Yeltsin had been due to return to the Kremlin for the first time since the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Mine kills 17, injures 14 in Angola

LISBON (Reuters) - Seventeen people, mainly women and children, were killed and 14 injured yesterday when a truck hit a mine in the central Angolan province of Huambo, scene of fierce fighting between government forces and rebels, Portugal's Lusa news agency said. Lusa, quoting Luanda radio station Radio Ecclesia, said that the injured were taken hospital in the provincial capital, Huambo, in serious condition. The truck was destroyed in the blast. The agency said the victims had been travelling from the village of Gongoinga, some 15 km. from Huambo, to the provincial capital in search of food.

German chancellor defends citizenship reforms

BERLIN (AP) - Dismissing right-wing critics of his proposed citizenship law reform, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder yesterday said allowing dual nationalities is an imperfect but acceptable way to help integrate foreigners. "I don't want dual citizenship. That's not the goal of the law. But I will accept it to promote the goal of integration," he said at a news conference. Schroeder described Germany's 86-year-old citizenship law, which is based on ethnicity rather than place of birth, as being out of place in a modern Europe and fast-changing world.

Japan launches new coalition government

TOKYO (AP) - Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi's ruling Liberal Democrats and a rival conservative party launched a coalition government yesterday, but the benefits the deal might have for Japan's sinking economy remain unclear. The pact was consummated with a cabinet shake-up that trimmed the number of ministers and handed a portfolio to an official of Obuchi's new partner, the Liberal Party. The government still lacks a majority in the upper house of parliament, and it enters next week's regular session of the legislature needing to woo part-time allies to pass vital economic revival bills.

Queen to open her art collection to the public

LONDON (AP) - The royal family's extensive art collection, one of the best in the world, will be put on display to the public in a major new gallery planned for Buckingham Palace.

The £10 million gallery is scheduled to open in time for Queen Elizabeth II's golden jubilee in 2002, when she celebrates the 50th year of her reign, the palace said yesterday.

The royal collection includes some 9,000 pictures, 30,000 drawings, and thousands of prints, as well as books, furniture, sculpture, armor, and jewelry. It features works by Leonardo Da Vinci, Rembrandt, and Michelangelo.

"The idea is not to put on great blockbuster exhibitions," said Hugh Roberts, director of the Royal Collection. "I doubt whether there's a single major work of art - or minor one - in the Royal Collection that has not been seen... But the new gallery will allow us to show substantially more works of art at any one time."

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A wide open race

With Labor Party leader Ehud Barak's Wednesday speech to his party's convention, the battle lines of Campaign '99 are becoming clearer. Binyamin Netanyahu's campaign is summarized by the crude territorial slogan, "Barak will hand over, the Likud will keep." Barak's push will be double-barrelled: I will revive the peace process and the economy.

And the anticipated Meridor/Shahak party will stress national reconciliation and good government.

The political strength of Netanyahu's approach is that it plays both to his own political base and to the deepest fears of the electorate. Though the grand debate over the peace process has narrowed greatly since the Likud's de facto embrace of the Oslo Accords, the voter wants Israel to get the best deal possible in the critical negotiations ahead. On the peace issue, Barak is coming at Netanyahu from both the left and the right, arguing that the prime minister has hobbled the peace process and eroded Israel's negotiating position along the way. Barak's Exhibit A is the release of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (following the botched Masalha assassination); Exhibit B is President Bill Clinton's visit to Gaza, providing implicit recognition of a future Palestinian state.

The thrust of Barak's keynote speech, however, was not on the peace process, but on unemployment, children below the poverty line, and hospital beds stuck in hallways. Barak's campaign themes reflect a transition from the peace-and-security dominated debate of the past toward the "post-ideological" socio-economically oriented politics of the future.

Ben Meridor and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak are betting even more heavily that the public is ready for post-security politics. They are dismissing the peace and security debate as a decided issue, while focusing on what polls indicate is the public's greatest concern for the nation's future: tears in the social fabric.

Campaign '99 is shaping up as a Chinese menu of fears—over security, peace, prosperity, and unity. All of these campaign themes, whether expressed in the form of fears or hopes, are legitimate. None of these popular desires is a luxury item, and they are deeply intertwined.

Though single-issue campaigns are regarded by political consultants to be the most effective, what the public ultimately wants is a synthesis of its needs. In the peace process, the key to effectiveness is not approaching the negotiating table with the toughest stance, but with the broadest base.

Netanyahu's narrow right-wing government has demonstrated that it can deliver large Knesset majorities for agreements, but at the price of the coalition falling and international isolation that has eroded Israel's negotiating leverage and room to maneuver. A Labor government, even one led by the relatively hawkish Ehud Barak, might mean a return to the opposite Catch-22, in which the peace process becomes more divisive at home, while Israel's political capital increases abroad.

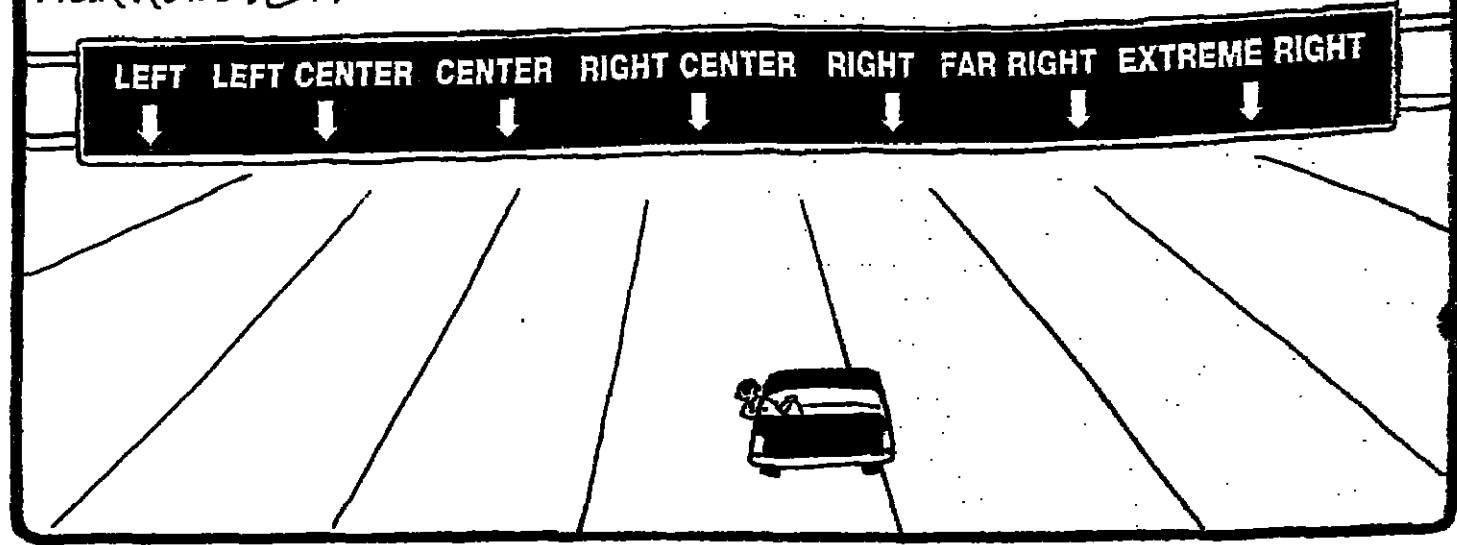
Ironically, the ticket that is dismissing the peace-and-security debate as passe, arguably has the strongest case to make on the issue. A unity government led by Labor or Likud might temporarily postpone conflict between the parties over peace and security, but each party would be acutely aware that it could have to compete again with the other over this issue.

The synthesis between Meridor and Shahak within the same party, on the other hand, has the potential to more permanently blur this classic dividing line, both within politics and society. This unified stance, in turn, would place Israel at the strongest position at the negotiating table, whether in terms of resisting dangerous concessions, making necessary ones, or insisting on Palestinian compliance.

Regarding economic and social issues, the challenge is not to describe the nation's ills with the most pathos, but to present the most thoughtful, concrete plan to tackle known problems. Netanyahu can take credit for restoring fiscal responsibility, but he is seriously tarnishing that record with his election-driven backtracking on inflation and budgetary restraint.

Barak's economic program consists mainly of shifting whose ox is gored, without comprehensive proposals for systemic reform. Meridor and Shahak have not gone beyond the usual slogans to formulating concrete proposals to promote economic growth and heal societal rifts. The race is wide open.

MEIR ROMENOFF



The real test

ZE'EV B. BEGIN

The renowned Israeli creativity has lately found a rather bizarre expression in politics. "Government by abstention" enabled several cabinet ministers, elected to make decisions, to abstain in two crucial votes concerning the Wye agreement. Then, public vacillations transformed the political arena into a poor theater, in which Hamlets shop around for a safe seat, under whatever banner.

Another novelty is leadership through silence, or the art of saying less. Aimed at producing an image of depth, it fails to conceal the real deal: What you hear is what you get.

These are mere additions to the older policies of deception that prevail within the emptiness of the new Israeli center, comprising Likud, Labor, and the embryonic centrist party. Attempting to create a false impression, their leaders hint that they possess the key that will open the door to peace and security with the PLO. Alas, they don't.

All three parties are held captive by a 30-year-old dogma, completely detached from Middle Eastern reality. It is the notion of "territorial compromise," that trick which, by splitting sovereignty in Samaria, Judea, and Gaza, is to win the heart of Yasser Arafat. It will not. The PLO cannot be appeased by a mere piece of cake, however large.

The conclusion is simple. After further territorial concessions, a stalemate is bound to take place, and a violent clash must be expected.

The territory ceded to the PLO will then serve as a launching pad for terrorist attacks against Israelis. The logic is so clear that it makes one wonder what happened to Jewish intelligence, but further observation reveals that there is method to the silliness.

ingenious justification for ceding more of our land to the PLO/Hamas alliance. Terror cannot be eliminated, these champions of peace now concede, so the only remaining option is to satisfy Arafat to the degree that will make him refrain from initiating a major,

Netanyahu, Barak, and Shahak have all expressed, one way or another, their agreement to the establishment of a PLO state

Drifting without compass (the result of a politically correct effort to reject ideology), proponents of the older banner of "land for peace" actually abandoned it in view of the harsh reality. Aiming too high, the old slogan was replaced by another one, "land for security," considered good enough under the circumstances.

However, being out of touch with the new-but-old Middle East, even this slogan is now clearly obsolete. The long-term strategic alliance between the PLO and Hamas, which was formalized in 1995 (when Shimon Peres served as prime minister), turned into a futility—the hope that the PLO will crush Hamas on behalf of Israel.

BUT OUR hopefuls always think of something. The new thing is an

(January 1): "To give away what must be given away; to refrain from giving away that which we possibly can refrain from giving."

How do we know what "must be given?" Simple — Netanyahu will tell us, after consulting some public opinion polls.

In other words, Netanyahu plans (if this is the correct term) to continue drifting down the Wye River. Sensing public fatigue through the polls, he interprets leadership as echoing public sentiment and molding it into the despair of "no choice."

In the same desperate vain, National Religious Party leader Yitzhak Levy defined his policy this week as "salvaging whatever can be salvaged," as if the State of Israel, at a peak of its economic and military strength, is a burning Jewish shtetl following a pogrom.

Netanyahu invests much energy in an attempt to sharpen the not-existent difference between himself and Ehud Barak and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. But all three have expressed, one way or another, their agreement to the establishment of a PLO state, and all three view Samaria, Judea, and Gaza as pieces of real estate to be traded away.

An alternative to this dangerous concept is a must in order to stop the illogical process whereby Israel strengthens its enemy on the eve of a violent collision.

The writer, an MK, has announced his candidacy for the premiership as head of the Herut Party.

The center does not hold

NAOMI CHAZAN

The name of the political game today is the center. Everyone wants to be there, even if nobody quite knows where it is located or what it means.

In the past few weeks, the scramble for a slot in the elusive centrist landscape has reached seismic proportions. But does the current stampede for possession of the center furnish an answer to the earthquake now shaking Israel? The answer is a decisive no.

The quest for the center is fairly easily explainable. First, personal animosities play a leading role. Deep antipathy towards Binyamin Netanyahu has yielded a crop of contenders-detectors. Some have chosen to fight the battle internally (Moshe Arens, Uzi Landau), another has selected the ideological route (Ze'ev [Benny] Begin), and two have opted for the center (Dan Meridor and Ronni Milo). Skepticism regarding Ehud Barak's capabilities and prospects has given birth to the Amnon Lipkin-Shahak candidacy, also in the already crowded middle ground.

Second, individual ambition is rampant. The new field of prime ministerial aspirants and the plethora of new lists has increased the likelihood that both Labor and the Likud will lose a substantial number of seats in the forthcoming Knesset (hence the intra-party acrimony of recent days). Insecure incumbents are standing in line to join the centrist lists-in-formation, and many newcomers realistically have few other places to go.

Third, politicians have capitalized on what they themselves have manufactured: a popular call for a bridge between Left and Right, religious and secular, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi, doves and hawks, rich and poor. They realize full well that the center is the place to be, even if

it does not exist.

Fourth, the system of direct election of the prime minister favors those who can attract the floating vote — the 2 percent or 3 percent that, ultimately, will determine the outcome of the prime ministerial race.

The leaders of the two veteran parties, Barak and Netanyahu, are

careers as Labor doves? Or that the Orthodox Alex Lubotzky and the secular champion Ronni Milo don't see eye-to-eye on issues of religion and state? They're now in the center.

And if Avraham Burg and Haim Ramon don't like their prospects in Labor, they'll move to Shahak because Israeli politics, so they

The centrist fashion is fast becoming a cover for ongoing ambiguity and the glorification of indecision

engaged in an ongoing battle to claim the crucial centrist title, even if they can't agree on what qualifications are needed.

The center is crowded territory today: Old parties (with the addition of Nathan Sharansky's Yisrael Ba'alya) are seeking inclusion and new ones are vying for it. There are soft centers and hard ones (Shinui), single-issue centers (the two new Green lists) and composite ones. In the final analysis, all the contestants know full well that when the time comes to establish a coalition in what is an increasingly splintered party scene, the centrist label is the surest avenue to power and seats in the next government.

WHY, THEN, is the centrist trend so potentially devastating? On a superficial level, it is not clear who composes it. The political arena has been transformed into a game of musical chairs, where self-proclaimed leaders shift from place to place for no apparent purpose other than their own self-preservation.

So what if Hagai Merom and Nissim Ziv built their political

believe, really can't do without them. They will find Yossi Peled, one of the key Oslo opponents, along with Uri Savir, one of its architects, already there.

The current political dance has a disturbing common denominator: the perpetuation of the existing old-boys network (women are notably absent), replete with the same aging faces adorned in unfamiliar garb.

The presumption underlying this reshuffle is even more disconcerting: that individuals and personalities are more important than any substantive program.

And, indeed, the content of the centrist fashion remains a mystery. It is fast becoming a cover for ongoing ambiguity and the glorification of indecision. Thus, not one of the leading candidates is really against a Palestinian state (they're too practical), but neither do they support it outright (that would be too risky politically). Although they loudly proclaim their aversion to religious coercion, they support coercive legislation in the name of unity. They decry massive public

spending, while promoting grandiose social schemes, and they constantly mouth what they think disparate groups want to hear.

So, on virtually every issue, ambivalence is nurtured in the name of pragmatism. Compromise, however, is not simply a useful buzzword which generates a good feeling; to be achieved it requires hard work and a willingness to grapple with painful problems, something notably absent in the new political discourse.

Ironically, the centrist logic, with its unifying theme, has become the trigger for severe political fragmentation. The 15th Knesset will probably be more splintered and unmanageable than the outgoing one; further exacerbating serious problems of governance.

Most perniciously, in a period of gross uncertainty on virtually every front, the new centrist offers precious few solutions. This is a time to make decisions, not to escape them. Soothing platitudes cannot replace the need for hard choices, nor can eloquent statements substitute for a sense of purpose and clarity of direction.

For too long our leaders have avoided coming to terms with the contentious questions that lie at the root of the present malaise. These issues must be dealt with now. Any further delay will further destabilize the already shaky fabric of our society.

These elections can be a force for real reinvigoration, but only if they present the electorate with the opportunity to make clear choices between ideological alternatives. The rush to the center may seem to offer something new. In fact, it is an illusory palliative that delays the urgent need to confront ourselves and our future.

The writer is a Meretz MK.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FRANK FOLEY HELPED ME

Sir: — I was deeply touched by your article about Frank Foley. "Honor" sought for "UK's Schindler" (January 3).

I believe I must have been one of the first persons he helped. I am a German Jewess who, in 1933, had to leave school and left Germany for England and Switzerland. As at that time Jews were allowed to go to Palestine on a "capitalist" certificate, my father asked the British authorities to grant me such a certificate. By 1938 I still had not been granted my certificate and I went home to Germany to visit my parents.

My father took me to Berlin

where there was a Palestine Office. A nice gentleman there told us he could not help me, but knew of somebody who might. He made a phone call, wrote down a name and address, and told us to go there now and ask for Captain Foley.

When we came to that address, I thought it was a British consulate. As a matter of fact, I thought so all my life until I read your article. We mentioned that we came from the Palestine Office and were shown into the office of a gentleman who introduced himself as Foley. There, on the spot, he issued me with a certificate to Palestine.

A month later I landed in Haifa. I did not dare to send Captain Foley a thank-you note, for by that time it had dawned on me that he must have done something illegal in providing me with a certificate and I was afraid that a note might cost him his job.

I would only be too relieved and happy if his name was recognized in Yad Vashem. It has always been a burden to me that I had no way to show him my thanks. I am now 81 years old, but I have never forgotten my relief when I left Germany.

EVA HIRSCHFELD
Kibbutz Erez.

FUDGING ANTI-BEDUIN POLICY

Sir: — In his letter of January 8, Aharon Vardi, director-general of the Nature and National Parks Protection Authority, resorted to misleading arguments to deflect criticism of the anti-Beduin practices of the authority's "Green Patrol".

1. One is that the Supreme Court always upholds government policy against Beduin appeals. With all due respect, the court has intrinsic obstacles to ruling in the Beduins' favor. First, it does not possess the power of judicial review. If the lawmakers legislate an unjust law, the court must ensure that people obey it. In the Beduin case, the Knesset's will to deny them their rights to traditional lands is manifest in its laws.

Moreover, the Supreme Court only reverses governmental actions taken under the law if overwhelming grounds for the reversal exist. In 1981, Beduin appealed against an ordinance outlawing goat raising in all the Negev south of Dimona. The top four ecologists of desert grazing and vegetation (Prof. Ezer, Prof. Noy-Meir, Naveh, and Danin) also argued that the ordinance was too broad. However, because the authority brought two, albeit non-

desert, ecologists (Prof. Zahavi and Mendelsohn) to uphold the ordinance, the court left it.

2. Another authority argument is that its wardens are always cleared in cases of shooting and Beduin deaths. Is it because Beduin aren't worthy of a Jew's conviction? In 1981, a soldier, helping the Green Patrol confiscate some goats, shot and killed the shepherdess, but was merely demoted and detained for 38 days. Later, a warden shot and seriously wounded a Beduin near Sde Boker, but was cleared on the claim that he thought it was a terrorist.

In 1981, an infant died after the Green Patrol evicted him and his mother to an unfamiliar, open area on a freezing night, but the director of the government forensic institute, Dr. Bloch (who stepped down in 1985, on charges of false reports) submitted that "no definite cause of death was found."

Upon studying Bloch's report, the Head of Hadassah's Intensive Care Unit for Children, Prof. Golein, testified, "The exposure of the two-month old infant, suffering from pneumonia, to continual cold, largely contributed to the deterioration of the infant and, ultimately, to his death." Still, the police pressed no charges.

3. In portraying the Green Patrol

as benign to the Beduin, the authority points to supposed activities on their behalf: like immunizing livestock, allotting winter pasture, and running an experimental livestock farm. But the Agriculture Ministry introduced these activities long before the Green Patrol, and they were for the general welfare.

Vardi's claim that Beduin livestock doubled between 1977 and the present is unfounded. Without comprehensive head-counts before the 1980s, we don't know the earlier figures? Moreover, everyone knows that the Green Patrol confiscated tens of thousands of goats during this period. If the Beduin revived their economy somewhat through sheep-raising, it was not to their liking. Unlike goats, sheep need fodder, which reduces their profit.

Vardi says the authority is considering charging me "in a court of law for hurting public officials" (i.e., the Green Patrol). It would do better to consider ridding itself of the Green Patrol, before its international nature colleagues and sponsors realize that it cynically exploits "Green" for political ends.

CLINTON BAILEY
Jerusalem.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On January 15, 1934, *The Palestine Post* reported that the government had promulgated a new ordinance for licensing of meetings and processions in anticipation of massive Arab

unrest and demonstrations. 25 years ago: On January 15, 1974, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger returned to Jerusalem from Egypt with President Sadat's

counter-proposals for the disengagement of forces which made a compromise possible. There had been heavy exchanges of fire on both the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. Alexander Zivli

POSTSCRIPTS

REDDY Kilowatt, the lightning bolt-bodied electrical power mascot who was retired 25 years ago, is making a comeback. The 73-year-old utility spokesman, known for his light-bulb nose and wall-socket ears, has also been given a brother, Reddy Flame, whose job is to promote natural gas. Flame has a fiery torso, pipeline limbs and an oven-knob nose.

Kilowatt, who was banned from Cuba by Fidel Castro, was known as Don Kilowatt in Spain. Faisca "Sparky" Kilowatt in Portugal and

Le Bon Genie de L'Electricite in Belgium.

FIVE TONS of dog food have been shipped to victims of Hurricane Mitch in Honduras. The chow was donated by the Hill's pet food company to feed an estimated 20,000 canines.

In a related story, US pets are being asked to donate toys to a New Jersey company that promises to distribute the items to "animals that will be alone for the holidays." In exchange, the philanthropic pets

receive a "Nobel Pets Prize" collar medalion and applications for a pet Mastercard.

SCRATCH-AND-SNIFF ads are about to be outdone by edible ones. A Florida company claims it has invented a process for publishing magazine ads that taste like whatever food or beverage is being promoted. The technique uses rice paper coated with flavoring and printed with edible ink. OK, but no ads for deep-fried tarantulas, please.

A FILM developer who said she became depressed on the job after working in the dark for 25 years sued her former employer for allegedly refusing to let her do part of the work in a lighted area.

Dorothy Neubauer claimed that Eastman Kodak Company's alleged refusal to accommodate her impairment, known as Seasonal Affective Disorder, violated the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Seasonal Affective Disorder can be triggered when people do not spend enough time in the light.

Why I'm staying home

LIMOR LIVNAT

The Likud is my political home, and I have decided to stay. It is no secret that I have had, and continue to have, strong differences with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on a number of important issues. For example, changing the terms of engagement of the Oslo Accords to include reciprocity was the right thing to do. But the implementation of that policy has sorely lacked consistency, causing the disenfranchisement of part of the Likud's electorate, and worse, creating unnecessary antagonism among Israel's

Those who argue that there is no longer any difference between the Likud and the Barak-led Left are mistaken

friends and defenders around the world.

But when Yasser Arafat expresses his interest in Ehud Barak winning the upcoming elections, everything takes on a different perspective. Any differences I have with the prime minister are dwarfed by the differences I have with Barak.

Barak is the leader of a political party which has grown bankrupt of ideology, bereft of vision, and devoid of hope.

In the past, the Left's argument in favor of far-reaching unilateral Israeli concessions was that Israel must not rule over another people. Today, when 100 percent of the Arabs in Gaza and 98 percent of the Arabs in Judea and Samaria are under the domination of the Palestinian Authority, that argument holds no water. Yet the Left continues with its frenzied commitment toward surrender of our homeland; toward the reduction of Israel to a state nine miles wide once again; toward taking unnecessary risks with our national security; toward the creation of yet another Arab autonomy in the Middle East; toward the re-division of

Jerusalem.

The re-division of Jerusalem, the natural and necessary outcome of Labor policies, is not "just" a serious security blunder, with the potential of turning the city into another Belfast. Jerusalem is not only the capital of Israel. It stands as the salient symbol of Jewish continuity throughout the ages, of the miracle that is the rebirth of Jewish sovereignty in the historic Jewish homeland, and of promise for the future that never again will the Jewish people be defenseless and dependent. To repudiate the city in a passing state of reactionary zeal and in pursuit of momentary satisfaction, is to tear asunder all of those values as well.

THOSE WHO argue that there is no longer any difference between the Likud and the Barak-led Left are mistaken. There are many practical policy differences in regard to economic, public education, and defense policies. But the deepest divide lies over the Left's embrace, whether by default or careful intent, of post-Zionism, a fatigue-inspired belief that Israel has nothing left to do but adopt a posture of national submission.

I am convinced that the majority of the Israeli electorate believes that we have not yet reached the "end of days"; that Zionism is not dead, but very much alive; that we still have far to go in securing our future here both

physically and spiritually; that we still have millions of Jews to absorb, and parts of our homeland to resettle; that we have an historic obligation to serve as a source of identity and inspiration for Jews the world over and as a beacon of democratic light to those of the region who still dwell in moral darkness.

I continue to be convinced, as I was in 1996 when I headed the Netanyahu election campaign, that the majority of Israelis do not want a return to the four Labor-Meretz led years when large parts of the population were delegitimized and terror scored like never before with its victims labeled "sacrifices for peace."

The threats emanating from Gaza in regard to our immediate future are real. They have forced Israel to stand at a critical juncture, perhaps the most compelling moment since its re-creation, and there is no ideology at present better equipped to steer the nation to safe shores, than that borne by the Likud. That is what is of paramount importance now, everything else, no matter how valid, must wait. Benjamin Netanyahu stands the best chance of leading the Likud to a victory over the post-Zionists once again, and I believe that victory is something the country cannot afford to be without. For the sake of the homeland, I am staying home.

Middle Israel

AMOTZ ASA-EL

Misha's last battle

Hardly two years have elapsed since a brazenly thankless Binyamin Netanyahu maneuvered Moshe Arens away from the podium at a well-attended Likud gathering, at which the stern-faced former aeronautical engineer who launched Bibi's political career intended to scold his creation for nominating an obscure party hack as attorney-general.

Indeed, Arens's own elaborate career can — with the benefit of hindsight — be portrayed as a continuum of tragic failures of judgment in which launching Netanyahu's career is merely a link in a chain.

Yet at a time when, as Dan Meridor says, the struggle boils down to attitude, Misha Arens's seriousness, consistency, and sincerity make him loom tall as a model for voters to hail and for candidates to emulate.

Like his longtime ally, Yitzhak Shamir, Arens has — in this Israeli's view — fought all the wrong ideological battles, ever in

our last chance to fly into the future along with the world's leading aerospace powers, while preventing a dangerous brain-drain and preempting an unemployment crisis.

As it turned out, scrapping the Lavi — though done grudgingly — was one of the best decisions ever taken by an Israeli government. Financially, it freed up scarce taxpayer funds, which were soon indispensable for absorbing mass immigration; industrially, it gave impetus to the rise of a private, profitable, and chronically understaffed high-tech sector; and militarily, Israel's new challenge — rock-slinging kids — proved to be an antithesis to state-of-the-art, supersonic aircraft thousands of feet above and light years away from the Dehaishe, Shati, and Jelazun refugee camps.

NOW, SIX years after he abandoned politics, evidently disgusted by much of what he had seen there, Misha Arens finds himself embroiled in his last political bat-

When politics is as raw as a bullfight, Moshe Arens offers a reminder that public office need not be the exclusive lot of hollering oafs and moral midgets

quest of that unattainable, and often undesirable, grandeur which was the hallmark of Revisionist Zionism.

Back in 1978, Arens opposed the Camp David Accords, arguing that relinquishing the Sinai's oil wells was strategically unaffordable.

As it turned out, oil prices plunged so dramatically shortly afterward that some of its major producers, from Nigeria to Iran, are now in the doldrums. Israel, meanwhile, easily accessed abundant energy resources, and at the same time gained a priceless strategic asset in the form of a demilitarized Sinai, a buffer zone which pretty much makes it impossible for Egypt to launch a Yom Kippur style surprise attack, should it some day renege on its commitment to peace.

Then came Lebanon. The extent to which paring with the Sinai in 1982 prodded Likud leaders to invade our northern neighbor that same year has yet to be explored. What's clear is that, as minister of defense in 1983, Arens sought to entrench the IDF along the Awa River in the depths of Lebanon's infamous quagmire.

Ultimately, when then-defense minister Yitzhak Rabin pulled the army south to the current security zone, Arens opposed the plan, along with the rest of Likud's ministers, except David Levy.

Today, the public controversy is over the wisdom of staying within that narrower zone, a deeper one is inconceivable.

Two years later, Arens joined hands with Shamir in torpedoing Shimon Peres's London agreement with King Hussein, a deal which the two rightly assessed would have placed much of the West Bank under Jordanian tutelage. As it turned out, the lack of such an agreement led — within months — to the outbreak of the intifada, and a subsequent deal with Yasser Arafat which, from any Israeli viewpoint, is far worse than that which could have been struck with Hussein.

Later that year, Arens spearheaded the political battle of his life, fighting like a lion for the completion of the Lavi fighter-plane project. It is, he argued passionately,

to wrest his political home from his adopted son's grip.

Set against the backdrop of the causes he previously championed, it is tempting to portray Misha as a scientist staring his golem in the eyes moments after the latter destroyed the very lab in which he was assembled. Nothing could be more unfair than such an analogy.

For one thing, passing judgment on Arens's past stances is, for now, valid only as this point in time and in the eye of a beholder: how things will seem, say, a generation from now remains to be seen and may prove his Revisionist inclinations more valid than their alternatives.

Second, with all his shortcomings, Bibi is not a Frankenstein, but merely a failed prime minister whose diplomatic record is still better than Golda Meir's, and whose economic score sheet shines when compared with Menachem Begin's.

Finally, Arens is not a mad scientist, but a deeply conscientious politician who spotted a talented young man and made of him more than he deserved to be. That can happen to anyone. What's unusual is to acknowledge having fallen prey to such misjudgment, a feat which was beyond even King David as he fled his beloved and good-looking but frivolous, ungrateful, and megalomaniac son Absalom.

Arens, by contrast — just as he had the decency to leave the government after the Lavi's cancellation — is now acknowledging his mistake. In his very choice to stand in his creation's way, even if not by abandoning his trademark understatement and joining Bibi's rightist slanderers — from Yitzhak Shamir to Benny Begin — Arens is doing something which must for him be much more difficult than it is for a parent to slap a child in the face.

At a time when politics has become as raw as a bullfight, as transparent as pornography, and as base as Avigdor Lieberman's side-swipes at the judicial system, Misha's last battle should serve as a reminder that public office need not be the exclusive lot of hollering oafs and moral midgets.

Barak's problem is (still) Peres

In 1996, Shimon Peres lost the election to Binyamin Netanyahu. Now, Peres is doing his best to ensure that Ehud Barak, who succeeded him as head of the Labor Party, also loses.

In contrast to Yitzhak Shamir, who retired from active political life after losing the 1992 elections, Peres is still an MK and a prominent figure in the Labor Party leadership. While traveling around the world making speeches in the guise of his Center for Peace, he is, in all respects, still an active politician, and will be in the second spot on the Labor Party Knesset list, after Barak.

At the same time, the more Peres talks, the easier it will be for Netanyahu and the Likud to focus their campaign on him, rather than Barak.

This week, Peres met with and embraced Yasser Arafat, and addressed the Palestinian Legislative Council (or at least the 20 out of the 88 members who attended). In itself, such a meeting is not particularly damaging to Barak, as the majority of potential Labor voters have accepted the

need to meet and exchange views with the leaders of the Palestinian Authority, including Arafat. However, the message that is delivered in meetings with Arafat, both in terms of the body language and the words themselves, are important in the Israeli political context.

For Barak, the issue of a Palestinian state is still uncertain, perhaps reflecting the very real concern that such a state would become a terrorist base and would disintegrate into anarchy, like Somalia, Haiti, or Algeria. In contrast, over the past few years, Peres has become an enthusiastic supporter of Palestinian sovereignty. In Ramallah, he declared that "it is our deep hope not only that the Palestinian people will gain independence, but it is our common interest to see a Palestinian state take place as a result of an agreement — a state that lives democratically and flourishes economically."

The democracy and economic progress is still missing, but if this is the Labor Party's message, it should be up to Barak to deliver it, particularly during a closely contested election campaign.

GERALD M. STEINBERG

When Peres praised Arafat for steadfastly leading the Palestinian cause, he crossed a red line that will cost Barak and Labor dearly in the upcoming elections.

When Peres praised Arafat, he crossed a red line that will cost Barak and Labor dearly in the upcoming elections

SINCE THE 1993 Oslo agreement, it has become undiplomatic and politically incorrect to refer to Arafat's role in the long history of violence and terrorism. However, for an Israeli leader to rewrite history by absolving Arafat and the PLO of the murder of so many innocent victims is a moral travesty and a mutilation of history, which cannot be justified in terms of political expediency.

This is not the message that most Israelis would deliver to the Palestinians, to the international press that covered this event, or before major figures, such as former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev or South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

The pictures of Peres embracing Arafat stand in sharp contrast with the image of the late Yitzhak Rabin, when he stood on the White House Lawn in September 1993, reluctantly shaking the PLO leader's hand. In Rabin's gestures, as well as his words, he conveyed the message that while it may be important to make compromises, the brutal murders in the name of the Palestinian cause cannot simply be forgotten.

The Israeli athletes killed in Munich, the children in Ma'alot, the passengers on the buses and airplanes that were hijacked by PLO gunmen, the victims of bombs in marketplaces and attacks in hotels must not simply be erased from the history books or the memories of the families that remained behind. Beyond the moral issue, the message would be that terrorism pays. To convince enough skeptical

Israelis to vote for them, the Labor Party and Ehud Barak, in particular, have to find the right mix of realism and honesty. Realism requires dealing with Arafat to reach agreement on separation between Israelis and Palestinians (the same partition principle that the Arabs rejected violently in 1947). It also requires that Arafat and the Palestinian Authority put a permanent end to the waves of terror that destroyed the spirit of Oslo.

At the same time, both politically and morally, Barak must disassociate himself from the ease with which Peres freed Arafat of the responsibility for terrorism. Most Israelis know that had Arafat and the Palestinians chosen the path of peace and compromise in 1964, or 1974, or 1984, the lives of many innocent people, both Israeli and Palestinian, would have been saved.

Election campaigns that focus on sharp differences in views and policies help to clarify the choices and options for voters. In contrast, attempts to rewrite history and whitewash a painful past to fit a fashionable ideology and personal agenda are an insult to the public.

What's it all about?

JONATHAN ROSENBLUM

is perpetually amazed to meet "rabbi's" who do not make blessings before and after eating, do not cover their heads, and who are "married" to partners of the same sex.

Rabbi Ya'acov Kaminetsky once said of his 200 colleagues in the pre-war Lithuanian rabbinate, there was not one who did not

Most American Jews view their Judaism as a lifestyle choice; in Israel, the central religious issue remains the truth of the Torah

know the entirety of the Babylonian Talmud. Today, one can receive "ordination" with two semester-long courses in Talmud, and knowing less than any 10-year-old heder student in Jerusalem.

I have recently met a number of Reform rabbinical students. They were uniformly exemplary people — idealistic and ready to commit their lives, often at considerable personal sacrifice, to the Jewish people. But good intentions do not a rabbi make.

There is something vaguely

pathetic about heterodox rabbis' quest for recognition, first from the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate and now from the State of Israel. One who goes to sleep knowing little of Talmud or Shulhan Aruch, will not wake up knowing more, no matter what is stamped on his/her Israeli identity card. He or she won't even wake up a better guitar player.

SO MUCH for the heterodox. But why do the Orthodox continue a battle that so poisons relations with non-Orthodox Jews to whom they are eager to reach out? To understand the answer to that question requires some background in the different definitions given to Judaism in America and Israel.

Most American Jews view their Judaism as a lifestyle choice. Judaism is seen as pretty much custom-designed for the individual consumer. Everyone does as much or as little as he or she feels necessary to discharge a vague sense of historical obligation and affirm membership in the Jewish people.

In Israel, by contrast, the central religious issue remains not lifestyle, but the truth of the Torah. Even for the non-observant, Judaism continues to be defined as a relatively clear set of rules, which each individual may choose to follow or not. As Daniel Navon, a non-observant Jew writing in *Yediot Aharonot*, put it: The rules of Judaism are like the rules of chess. One can choose to play

chess or not, but one cannot allow triple jumps and continue to call it chess.

Orthodox Jews are determined to fight importation of the American definition of Judaism to Israel. In their view, the term Judaism is emptied of all coherence if made to embrace two mutually exclusive definitions. The traditional definition of Judaism as a body of God-given laws cannot coexist with definitions that deny both the gift itself and the binding nature of the laws. To admit the possibility of three equally valid "streams" — despite the absence of points of commonality — is to implicitly reject the traditional understanding of Judaism.

Jews have always argued about many things, including points of Halacha. But they accepted the binding nature of that Halacha and a certain method for its determination. Above all, there was no question about the identity of their fellow Jews with whom the debate would be conducted.

Multiple standards of conversion threaten to raise disunity to unprecedented and unbearable new heights. For the first time, we are no longer even able to agree on the contours of the community within which debate can take place or on whom we can marry.

I deeply regret that in last week's article, I erred in describing the conditions of Aldrich Ames' imprisonment, which are not as lenient as reported.

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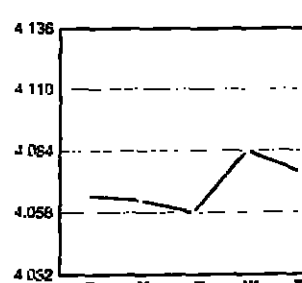
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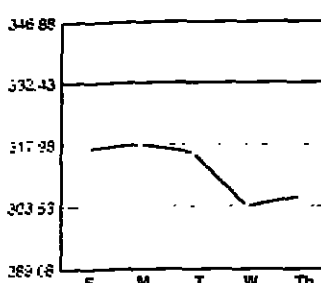
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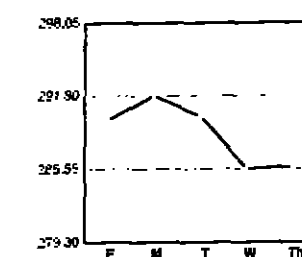


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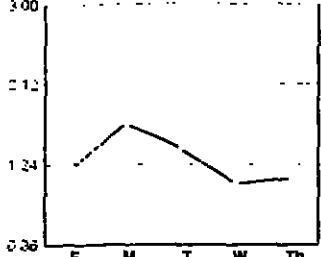
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BITS & BYTES

By NICKY BLACKBURN

Supercom wins \$18m. Brazil deal

Israeli company Supercom has won an \$18 million contract to supply the Brazilian government with a comprehensive system for issuing computerized travel documents such as passports and visas. It was announced this week.

Supercom, which is working on the project as part of the Siemens consortium, said the system would be deployed throughout Brazil as well as in some 100 embassies around the world. The total deal is worth an estimated \$130 million and the system should be completed by the end of the year.

Supercom has developed a digital print system which makes it impossible to forge documents. It has already undertaken the issue of digital passports in Britain and Hong Kong, and the issue of all personal documents in Slovakia.

A touch is all it takes

Tel Aviv-based Advanced Recognition Technologies (ART), has licensed its handwriting recognition technology to US company Cirque Corp. for a new touchpad with gesturing capabilities that allows users to navigate their PCs with the glide of a finger.

Using a modified version of ART's adaptable handwriting recognition engine embedded in the new Cruise Cat Internet touchpad, users can define simple touch gestures on the touchpad to open applications, files, and bookmarks for the Web. Default gestures, such as copy and paste enable easy editing with just a tiny movement of the hand.

The Cruise Cat is now on sale in the United States for \$110.

ISEF high-tech careers for kids

The International Foundation for Education (ISEF) has joined forces with Motorola Semiconductor Israel to actively prepare and encourage children in the Negev to seek out careers in high-tech. The project, which promotes studies in mathematics and computing among ninth-grade pupils, was revealed this week.

ISEF students who have received an academic scholarship from the foundation are to tutor pupils at the Or school in Yerushalayim in mathematics and computing with this aim. Motorola Semiconductor has promised to give project graduates preference when they are looking for work. If the project is a success the ISEF Foundation, which has been awarding scholarships to underprivileged youngsters for 20 years, hopes to introduce it to other schools in the area.

Hurvitz fined, gets suspended sentence

Teva CEO to appeal tax-fraud conviction within 45 days

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Teva Pharmaceuticals president and CEO Eli Hurvitz was sentenced yesterday by the Jerusalem District Court to 18 months' imprisonment, suspended for three years, and fined NIS 700,000 for tax fraud.

Last month the court convicted Hurvitz and two senior managers of pharmaceutical importer Promedico, Benjamin Jesselson and Alexander Eisenberg (who ran Promedico until 1993), of evading some \$18 million in taxes since 1982. This included \$3 million during the years when Promedico was a Teva subsidiary. Teva sold the company in 1987.

Jesselson was also given an 18-month suspended prison sentence and a NIS 700,000 fine, while Eisenberg was fined NIS 200,000, both for tax evasion. Promedico was fined NIS 7 million.

All three defendants said they plan to appeal their convictions within the next 45 days.

Asked by journalists if he plans to quit his job, Hurvitz said he intends to continue at the helm of Israel's pharmaceutical flagship. "As I have said before, I intend to appeal both my conviction and this sentence, which I believe to be a gross miscarriage of justice," he said. "I acted in good faith upon advice of lawyers and accountants and I am convinced that I am innocent of wrongdoing."

He said he expects the court will reverse its decision. "I intend to fully regain my good name," Hurvitz said.

Following sentencing, the executive committee of Teva's board of directors received legal advice that the sentence does not constitute an impediment to Hurvitz's continuing to serve as the company's CEO. In a statement the forum expressed full confidence in and support for Hurvitz.

According to the verdict, the



Teva CEO Eli Hurvitz (left) and his attorney, Ram Caspi, confer in Jerusalem District Court yesterday. Hurvitz said he intends to 'fully regain' his good name.

company set up a straw company overseas to conceal income, and kept fraudulent books.

Hurvitz was convicted of fraud, while Jesselson and Eisenberg were convicted of tax evasion. The three were acquitted, however, of charges of mismanagement with intent to deceive.

Trading in Teva's shares on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange was suspended after the verdict was issued. Before the halt Teva shares rose 4.2 percent to 168.8.

In her verdict, Judge Ayala

Procaccia wrote that the three committed the crime systematically, concealing the source of income from tax authorities for several years and thereby evading millions of dollars worth of taxes.

"Evading taxes, and especially such huge sums, means not only the deception of tax authorities and other authorities, but hurts any individual who is part of the Israeli public who carries the weight of the tax burden on their shoulders," Procaccia said.

Hurvitz, a former chairman of

the Manufacturers Association and one of Israel's most prominent business leaders, said he was surprised by the verdict. "The sentence is wrong," he told reporters outside the courthouse.

Hurvitz's merger-and-acquisitions strategies have turned Teva into Israel's largest drug company, and the most heavily traded Israeli stock on Wall Street.

Jesselson is involved in several local companies, including Elite Food Industries and Promedico, the drug importer representing

multi-national pharmaceutical giant Pfizer. Recently it was reported that he had sold his holding in Mirabilis for \$16m, when it was purchased by America Online.

The Securities Authority is investigating the activities of Jesselson and businessman Shlomo Eisenberg, who jointly control the Arad investment holding company, on suspicion of deceiving shareholders and conspiring to manipulate the results of a company vote.

Daimler to open local office, seek role in rail projects

Jerusalem Post Staff

DaimlerChrysler intends to open a representative office in Tel Aviv later this year to look for investment in the local technology industry and to participate in regional rail and water infrastructure projects, senior vice president Matthias Kleiner said yesterday in Tel Aviv.

Kleiner said DaimlerChrysler is committed to the Middle East peace process, and intends to assist in promoting it in the economic sense, "which is the key to political stability."

The local office is planned to rank among the company's 10 most important worldwide representative offices, and serve as headquarters for activities throughout the region.

At the moment, the Stuttgart-based company has no specific investment plans, but Godel Rosenberg, who will head the office, plans to explore investment possibilities.

Rosenberg, 52, said the com-

pany had heard "pessimistic voices," but chose to set to shop in Israel, due to its business potential.

"The most important question here is the transportation question," said Kleiner.

"We also have to think about how to supply water in the region."

"We, from the economic and the business side, can support the vision of the peace process," said Kleiner.

The Jerusalem and Tel Aviv municipalities have considered plans for urban rail networks, but the government has yet to officially endorse, and earmark funds for, such multi-million-dollar projects, as well as a Jerusalem-Tel Aviv railway.

Rosenberg said he expected progress on the construction of railways to be delayed at least until a new government is formed after May's election.

DaimlerChrysler gets about \$1 billion in annual revenue in Israel, mainly from sales of cars,

trucks, and buses, company officials said.

The company's Adtranz rail car joint-venture sells to the Railway Authority. The company has also invested up to \$10 million in Eurofund, an Israeli venture capital fund.

Daimler's \$37 billion acquisition of Chrysler last year was the largest-ever industrial merger, and created the world's third largest carmaker in sales and fifth largest in number of cars sold.

The conglomerate is also active in the aviation, rail, telecom, finance, and high-tech industries.

On the merger's eve Chrysler produced 2.8 million vehicles with 121,000 workers, earning \$2.8 billion, and Daimler-Benz made 1.5 million vehicles with 300,000 workers, earning \$1.78 billion in 1997.

Now the merged firm employs some 430,000 in 40 countries, with an annual turnover of \$132b.

Milgrom warns against breaching budget

By JESSICA STEINBERG

Breaching the 1999 budget framework and increasing the deficit could hamper prospects for economic expansion, thus prolonging the economic slowdown, State Budget Director David Milgrom said yesterday.

In a speech to the Israeli Center for Management, Milgrom said bills costing billions of shekels are being presented in the Knesset without their sponsors offering ways to fund them. Their passage might have a regressive effect on the economy, he added.

One of the programs at stake is the NIS10 billion Public Housing Law, passed by the opposition last October to allow 100,000 public housing tenants to purchase their homes at heavily discounted prices.

Knesset Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism) said Wednesday the controversial law is holding up passage of the two-week-overdue budgetary arrangements bill by the Finance Committee.

Milgrom said the government must show responsibility in the

coming months and if decisions are taken to increase expenditures, they must be offset by equal cuts in other outlays.

Milgrom also discussed the Treasury's austerity measures included in the 47-clause arrangements bill, commenting that these reforms would help decrease prices and amount to a devaluation in real terms. He emphasized that the Treasury intends to promote reform in the imports of pharmaceuticals, and accelerate competition in the telecommunications, public transport, water, and electricity sectors.

"The trend of structural reforms must be continued, despite the resistance by various groups," he said.

Milgrom pointed out that competition in the telecommunications industry has sharply slashed prices, resulted in better service, attracted billions of shekels in investment, and created jobs.

Ravitz said he expects the committee to pass the arrangements bill on Sunday. The government plans to pass the 1999 state budget by next Thursday, according to officials.

US inflation at 12-year low of 1.6%

By VINCE GOLLE

WASHINGTON (Bloomberg) — US consumer prices rose 1.6 percent in 1998, the lowest inflation rate in 12 years, the US Labor Department said yesterday.

In December prices rose 0.1%, as a jump in the cost of cigarettes was almost offset by a decline in gasoline and home heating oil prices.

The CPI core rate, which excludes food and energy costs, increased 0.3% in December. Last year, the core CPI rose 2.4%.

"Everything points to another low inflation year and that's great for consumers, because with labor market tight and wages growing, their real spending power is increasing," said Tim McGee, chief economist at Tokai Bank Ltd. in New York, before the report.

The inflation rate for last year compares with a 1.7% increase in

1997 and was the lowest since a 1.1% rise in 1986. In 1987, the core CPI rose 2.2%.

Economists surveyed by Bloomberg News expected a 0.2% rise in the December CPI and a 0.4% increase in the core CPI. In November, consumer prices rose 0.2%.

Prices consumers paid for tobacco products rose 18.3% in December. For all last year, tobacco prices rose 31.8%, a record. Excluding tobacco, the CPI was unchanged, while the core rate of consumer inflation rose 0.1%, a Labor Department spokesman said.

Energy prices, which account for about a tenth of the index, fell during December. For all last year, energy prices fell 8.8%, the biggest decline since a 19.7% drop in 1986.

Food prices, which account for about a fifth of the index, were unchanged last month. For all last

year, food prices rose 2.3%, the largest increase since a 4.3% gain in 1996.

Prices for gasoline and heating oil fell last month, and electricity costs were unchanged. The price of a gallon of unleaded gasoline for February delivery closed at 37.39 cents on December 15, down from 42.63 cents on November 10. The price of a gallon of heating oil for February delivery closed at 34.83 cents, down from 39.99 cents. Those dates correspond to the Labor Department's survey period for these prices.

Among other categories, health care costs rose 0.3%.

Housing costs increased 0.1%.

About 55% of the CPI covers prices consumers pay for services, ranging from doctor visits to airline tickets. Goods, ranging from food to autos, account for the rest.

The statistics on consumer inflation follow Tuesday's report that showed the producer price index rose 0.4% in December. The report was posted on the Internet a day earlier than scheduled.

The PPI's core rate rose 1.0% in December. Both the overall PPI and the core PPI were heavily influenced by a record jump in cigarette prices. Wholesale cigarette prices rose 30.7% last month, as tobacco companies began passing on the cost of a \$206 billion settlement reached with 46 states to cover health-care claims.

Without those increases, the December PPI would have fallen 0.4%, the Labor Department said.

This year, prices will probably rise, though analysts don't expect a big acceleration in inflation. "We come out of 1998 fearful that we'll get a little bit worse inflation in 1999," said Elliott Platt, chief economist at Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette Securities Corp. in New York.

Producer prices will probably start to rise this year because "the dollar is no longer appreciating and we're not going to have anything like last year's drop in petroleum prices," Consumer prices, he said, will probably rise by 2.4% this year.

"The consumer still has considerable fire power here," Platt said. The gains in the stock market over the past several years have added a considerable amount of cushion to consumer buying power, he noted.

Plus, the crisis in Asia has kept not only kept commodity and raw material prices low, it's discouraged US companies from raising prices of finished goods in order to stay competitive.

That's particularly evident in technology.

Last year, prices for personal computers and related equipment fell 35.8%, the Labor Department said.

Personal computer prices fell to a record low in November as a third of all machines sold at retailers cost less than \$800, according to PC Data Corp., a market-research firm. PCs costing less than \$1,000 accounted for 59% of all PCs sold in November. That means PC makers want to trim the

costs of components to protect their profits.

CompUSA Inc., the nation's largest computer retailer, said sales at stores open at least a year fell 4.7% in its fiscal second quarter as prices for personal computers continued to decline.

"Unit sales of desk-top PCs increased by 50%, while average selling prices dropped by 20% compared to last year," said James F. Halpin, president and chief executive officer at Dallas-based CompUSA Inc. in a January statement.

CompUSA said it expects its gross margin to decline 75 to 100 basis points below its margin for its fiscal first quarter.

Many economists contend that the CPI actually overstates inflation by as much as a full percentage point annually. So, starting with the January CPI, set for release February 19, the Labor Department will adjust the calculation of the CPI to reflect the fact that US consumers tend to shop around for the best value, and buy less costly alternatives when prices rise.

The change to the formula — to account for what is known as "lower-level substitution bias" — is expected to shave about two-tenths of a percentage point from the reported annual inflation rate. That, in turn, will reduce government spending for Social Security and other programs that are adjusted yearly to keep up beneficiaries' payments with inflation.

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2	Monsie Tool	81,265	-1,975
3	MPC Inc.	2,000	-4,975
4	Morgan	12,125	-1,025
5	Ind Comm Bank	15	-1
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-1.0825	Fortnite Brands	14.183
-0.0625	Fortune Wheelor	27.062
+0.4375	Furniture Brands	54.437
+0	Gateway 2000	37.51
-0.125	GAIX Corp	69
+0	GTE Corp	63.61
-0.125	Gannett	59
+0	Gap Inc Del	31.06
-0	Gencomp	54.61
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	Gen Dynamics	97.06
	Gen Electric	81.81

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+0	Gen Reinsurance	
-2	Gen Overseas	2
	Gen Overseas	31.1
	Georgia Ports	82
	Georgia Pac	14.3
	Germany Fund	51
	Gillette	89
	Gilco ADR	85.0
	Golden W Fund	24.4
	Goodrich (BF)	50.1
	Goodyear Tire	15.8
	Gasco (W&P)	36
	Granger (WH)	29.0
	Grt All Pac Tm	2.5
	Grt Central Mine	3.0
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*In local currencies

The dollars that pave the way to the top

Candidates vying to be prime minister of Israel must exploit ties in the US to finance their campaign. Marilyn Henry describes how it works

The road to the Prime Minister's Office winds through New York, Miami, Chicago and Los Angeles, where local Jewish machers, borrowing from American campaign tactics, ante up for Israeli candidates.

In the last election, American Jews contributed between \$6 million and \$8 million to Israeli campaigns, informed sources estimate. The traditional American-style fund-raising should come as no surprise, given the Israeli candidates' reliance on the likes of American political consultants Arthur Finkelstein and James Carville.

"There's no secret to the system. The secret is who's with who and how much the candidates are raising," said one political operative for leftist candidates and causes. "None of these guys start without knowing someone in the United States."

Israeli dignitaries and politicians, in the course of their careers, have met local and national American Jewish leaders during official visits to the US or through tours and speaking engagements sponsored by Israel Bonds, UIA, local federations and synagogue groups.

"The trick is to try to turn those connections into political relationships," the source said.

It also helps if the candidate is keyed into a prosperous crowd. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, for instance, didn't tap into the right clique when he came to the US last July. The former chief of general staff gave a speech in Washington at the convention of Women's American ORT. "There were probably only one or two really big-money people there," the source said.

Shahak will soon have another shot at affluent American Jews, when he comes to the US later this month and meets with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. Although he will not make a public pitch for campaign funds, he'll be milking about with a moneyed group. (His agenda seems, however, as much big-brother as big bucks, as he also is tentatively scheduled to address the elite Council on Foreign Relations in Manhattan.)

THE major amounts for American campaigns come from what is known in the US as "soft money" — a term that has taken on a pejorative meaning. "Soft money" refers to hefty campaign contributions that are able to skirt strict federal regulations limiting what individuals can donate to political candidates because the "soft" contribution is indirect.

In an effort to block influence peddling, American law restricts contributions to campaigns; individuals can give a few thousand dollars per election, while unions and corporations are barred from making donations.

But soft money is the legal loophole in the American campaign finance law.

There are no limits on donations of "soft money" to nonprofit "educational" and "social action" organizations, or to types of political action committees, even if they happen to be aligned with or would benefit a candidate. This allows wealthy benefactors — as well as unions, corporations and professional associations — to legally give unrestricted amounts to organizations that then use those funds to help a candidate.

In the US, for example, an organization can raise and spend endless amounts on so-called "issue advertising" — even if the ad features a candidate — so long as it does not actually tell someone to cast a vote for that candidate or a political party.

Presidential and congressional candidates raised some \$2 billion for their 1996 campaigns, according to estimates reported in *The New York Times*.

Democrats and Republicans raised, in soft money, some \$89 billion for the 1992 American elections; in 1994, \$107 billion; and double that in 1996, the *Times* reported.

Contributions to Israeli campaigns also are soft money, sources said. That would allow any donor to evade legal restrictions on campaign aid.

Among the vocal opponents of Israeli election campaigns is Abraham Foxman, director of the Anti-Defamation League, and he



Miami philanthropist Irving Moskowitz (right), accompanied by New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind, visited Israel this week in search of the ideal candidate to back for prime minister. On Tuesday he stopped to see one of the properties he supports — the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva in the Old City's Moslem Quarter. (Brian Henderson)

has called for full disclosure of American financial support for Israeli candidates. But soft money, being indirect aid, would elude most, if not all, such reporting requirements.

Last week, the American Reform and Conservative movements, which technically are non-partisan and do not support any political party, called on the members of their 1,800 affiliated congregations in North America to deny financial support to candidates or organizations that do not support religious pluralism.

Although the amounts raised by Reform and Conservative Jews is not known, it is widely assumed that they are significant donors. However, the reliable and heavier-hitters, such as Irving Moskowitz, are from the Orthodox community.

The "first tier" donors, whose contribution can exceed

\$100,000, are said to include Moskowitz, S. Danny Abraham, Joseph Gutnick, Ira Rennert, Ronald Lander and the Bronfman family. The "second tier" gives between \$10,000 and \$100,000. There is no third tier.

Moskowitz was in Israel this past week, visiting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and making his rounds among right-wing groups. The purpose of his trip? To strengthen Israel's Right and decide who to back in the upcoming elections.

IT'S widely assumed that Netanyahu, MK Natan Shazar and Labor leader Ehud Barak are actively fund-raising in the US.

Netanyahu and Shazar are presumed to have loyal benefactors, while Barak is said to be facing competition for the American campaign dollar.

Two fairly prominent "second tier" donors on the Left said last week in New York that they had not yet been approached by Israeli candidates.

"I'm very surprised, it's been so quiet. Nobody has called me [to give money] on behalf of people I would be happy to help," said one donor, who speculated that it is because the political alliances had not yet "crystallized."

The second, who made a donation in the last campaign, said he was relieved that none had contacted him. For the moment, some potential donors appear to be sitting on the sidelines, withholding political and financial support while they wait to see where the dust settles.

Although the election is months away, said one analyst in Washington, "guys like [Dan] Meridor, [Ronni] Milo and Shahak

already are behind. They need to get to know more people before they can ask for money." In most instances, fund-raising is supposed to be a private, rather secretive affair, although some donors appear to reveal in the influence it confers.

THE Bronfman family's liquor and entertainment company, Seagram, gave \$1.19 million in soft money from the beginning of 1995 through June 1996 for that year's American election, according to *The New York Times*. That amount was higher than the contributions of the American Bankers Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the powerful gun lobby, the National Rifle Association.

Edgar Bronfman, the president of the World Jewish Congress, often recounts the way in which he

prodded President Bill Clinton to work with the White House's arch-enemy, former Senator Al D'Amato, on the issue of recovering dormant Jewish assets from Swiss banks. Bronfman relates how he hosted a political fundraiser with Hillary Clinton at his New York apartment in 1996, at which he arranged to meet with the president for 30 minutes on the following day to discuss the Swiss banks.

On the Israeli front, Bronfman also was host at the only public — inadvertently so — fund-raiser in New York for Shimon Peres's 1996 campaign.

The media, leaving a Peres news conference at the Regency Hotel, walked smack into a flock of would-be Peres donors milling around the lobby, waiting for someone to announce the room for their private meeting.

The not-for-profit election loophole

Direct foreign donations to Israeli political campaigns are illegal. So says the law. But that's only the tip of the iceberg.

Lurking below the surface, in the murky waters of the polling season and the direct elections, lie the non-profit organizations. Any candidate or party can set one up and just about anyone can contribute to it. It is into these coffers that donors like Irving Moskowitz, S. Danny Abraham, Joseph Gutnick, Ira Rennert, Ronald Lander and the Bronfman family sink their significant contributions.

And it is from these organizations that the candidates for prime minister draw the money for their tours and cocktails, posters and banners, canvassing and rallies, polls, advisers, salaries and favors. However, it's not a total free-for-all. Non-profit organizations registered in the candidates' name are regulated. They have to report the source of their funding and are bound by many of the same laws that govern individual donations to the candidates. Non-profit organizations not formally linked to the candidate have more freedom, but are still restrained by strict restrictions that bar them from coordinating activities with the candidate.

In many cases a serious candidate will establish more than one non-profit organization, at least one not officially linked to their campaign, in order to maintain as much financial freedom as possible.

Senior Hebrew University political science professor Menachem Hofnung notes that, in any case, surveillance of the non-profit organizations "is very ineffective." As a result, under the direct-elections framework, the non-profit organizations are the mainstay of every candidate's finances.

Contributions made to the unofficially-linked non-profit organizations do not have to be reported, and no one can say for certain — unless shown the candidate's personal records — who is giving the money and how much. Informed sources say, however, that while there are several gener-

ous Israeli donors — such as banking and shipping mogul Ted Arison, building contractor Alfred Akroff, businessman Zvi Ben-Ari (convicted in March of fraud, forgery and blackmail), and casino magnate Reuven Gavriel — the really big bucks come from the United States and other foreign countries.

OUTSIDE of the non-profit organizations the campaign funding system works like this: Every party is allowed to spend a certain amount of money on its campaign, and the amount is calculated according to how many seats the party holds in the sitting Knesset. Some of this money comes from private contributions — which by law must come

from individual Israeli citizens and are limited to a certain sum — but most of the campaign funds for Knesset elections come from the state itself.

A complex system allocates each party an equal amount of state money, to which about NIS 1.3 million is then added for every sitting Knesset member. However, most of the money is handed out only after the results are in so that the sum can be corrected to the number of seats each party won.

For example, Labor, whose 34 seats make it the largest Knesset party, has been allotted approximately NIS 70 million for the 1999 campaign — of which about NIS 27 million will be handed out up front, and probably an equal amount (depending on how many of their MKs are elected) after the elections. The rest must come from private contributions and party coffers.

Parties running for Knesset for

the first time (say Ze'ev [Beny] Begin's party) can take out a bank loan according to certain rules, but the sum they spend on the campaign cannot exceed NIS 13 million.

In addition to this direct funding, the state supports each party's campaign indirectly — in the form of free air time, the amount of which is again worked out according to how many Knesset members the party has. Each MK is worth three minutes of airtime — which gives Labor some 102 minutes' worth of TV promos.

In the case of elections run-offs for prime minister, the state funds the whole round, dividing a certain sum equally between the two candidates.

In the *Journal of Law and Society* 23(1), 1996, Hofnung points out that relative to the number of voters nationwide, Israel's state funding of political parties is the highest in the world.

"In the national elections of 1992," he writes, "the parties received direct state subsidies equivalent to \$10.75 for each individual who gave her/his vote to any of the parties. Amongst the other Western democracies, Germany has the highest average public reimbursement with about \$3 per voter."

The public funding, however, only kicks in once the party list and the prime ministerial candidates have been chosen. It does not extend to internal party selection processes, which is where a significant part of the competition now takes place, and this is where the situation gets more complicated.

"It should be kept in mind that one of the strongest arguments

for adopting public funding was that adequate financial support from unbiased and neutral sources [the state] would free parties and candidates from over-dependence on organized or public interests who aspire to get easy and quick access to decision makers in return for their political contributions," writes Hofnung.

Until 1992, when direct elections and the primary system went into effect, a candidate did not have to raise large amounts of money to campaign for a seat on the party list.

To address the problem, the Knesset passed an amendment to the law in 1993 — effective 1996 — which set ceilings on both the collection and the spending of funds by candidates. Candidates for Knesset lists could accept independent contributions of up to NIS 5,000 (today about NIS 6,500) while prime-ministerial candidates could take in about NIS 20,000 (about NIS 26,000 today). Overall a candidate for the Knesset can collect and spend NIS 400,000, while a candidate running for prime minister or party leadership can collect and spend NIS 1.3 million. All the contributions must come from individuals, not corporations, and they have to come from Israeli citizens. The party itself acts as its own comptroller.

There is a loophole in the system in the form of the Nine-Month Law, which says that candidates only have to report on money they receive in the nine months prior to the elections. Accordingly a candidate would not have to report a \$2 million donation from a US corporation made 10 months before the elections. However, since the cap on how much money can be spent remains firm, the loophole only allows a candidate to quietly collect a large amount of money. They can't legally spend it.

As a result, a Likud Knesset hopeful who would have to canvass the 200,000 eligible voters on a budget of NIS 400,000, finds he can't get very far. So he opens a non-profit organization.

— Dana Harman

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Elections '99



Free nursery school for children aged three and up: election economics or better access to education?

(Brian Henderson)

With elections looming, the sky's the limit

When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took over the finance portfolio from Yaakov Neeman a month ago it seemed he might have been listening to the finance minister's parting words. At least one of the first messages to emanate from his newly acquired bureau was a loud and clear "no" to election economics.

Yet within days Netanyahu, the new finance minister, had canceled plans to abolish tax exemptions on rent revenue, started working on a mial tax reform, offered free-nursery education for children aged three years and up, and announced a NIS 1 billion aid package for northern border communities.

The moves were in direct contradiction to Neeman's parting warning to government ministers – be more careful with state coffers. The outgoing finance minister had sharply censured the coalition for consistently putting its interests before those of the state, and named this selfishness as one reason for his resignation.

Economists and opposition lawmakers were up in arms almost immediately, and the words "election economics" were on everyone's mind.

Netanyahu, however, denies that the changes in economic policy are geared toward enticing votes. "Look, it's not like I'm handing out video recorders, I'm taking our children, the children of Israel, and allowing each of them to attend nursery school," the prime minister said.

But Netanyahu's bag of economic goodies doesn't stop at preschool.

In an attempt to push through a proposal to lower top tax brackets without removing existing exemptions, Netanyahu tried to keep outgoing Tax Commissioner Doron Levy in office past his January 1 deadline – but was prevented from doing so by a court order that said the move was illegal.

Keeping Levy on would have

With three months to the election, acting Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has suddenly abandoned the belt-tightening measures of his predecessor. David Harris speaks to economists about the impact of the government's spending spree

allowed Netanyahu "to lower income tax without making enemies," noted a Treasury official.

NOW THE prime minister and finance minister is seeking to increase the 1999 inflation target from 4 to 6 percent, a move that would allow the Bank of Israel to cut interest rates – always popular before elections.

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, however, is less than pleased with the plan. Raising the inflation target will only lead to rising inflation, a devaluated shekel, wage erosion and a drop in exports, he said. Bottom line, raising the target inflation rate would seriously damage the chances of accelerated economic growth, he added. "Deficits won't help, nor will short-term policy," he said.

Frenkel's warning did not prevent Netanyahu from tempting voters with other mouthwatering prospects, however.

On Monday, he pulled the rug out from under Labor's feet by backing an opposition bill offering free nursery education to all children aged three and up. He even hijacked the credit for the bill's approval, dismissing accusations of election economics as irrelevant. The reason behind the bill was increased access to education, he insisted.

"We tightened the belt [during the first two years in office] but now is the time to loosen up a lit-

tle and the country's first obligation is to senior citizens and children," said Netanyahu.

Labor leader Ehud Barak was incredulous. "For two and a half years this education bill was rejected, then 125 days before the election it received the backing of the prime minister," he said.

The measure will cost the country NIS 750 million, Netanyahu said that initial costs would be kept to a minimum by implementing the program gradually over a number of years – starting in development towns and Druse communities.

Economist Ezra Sadan, a former Treasury director-general who now runs an economic advice company, says the free nursery-school proposal does not really reek of classical election economics.

"The effects of free education for three-year-olds won't be felt today or tomorrow, but in the years to come," explained Sadan. Election economics, to be functional and effective, must have immediate impact, he added.

Immediate impact, however, may be felt from Netanyahu's overruling of Neeman's decision to abolish an income-tax exemption on rental revenues. The measure was introduced a decade ago to benefit immigrants, but Neeman had canceled it after discovering that instead of helping the new comers, the bill was allowing

property owners to cream off additional profits while keeping rents high.

There is talk that Netanyahu also plans to back the Public Housing Law initiated by Ran Cohen (Meretz). The proposed law will offer tenants in government-funded housing the opportunity to purchase their homes at discounts of up to 85 percent, at a cost of some NIS 10 billion to the state. The Treasury has said it simply doesn't have the funds to back the bill.

In a further attempt to curry favor with both the public and legislators, Netanyahu has removed controversial steps from the Budgetary Arrangement Bill. The clauses to be eradicated include linking the minimum wage to inflation rather than the increase in the average wage; cutting certain national insurance payments; and updating MKs' salaries yearly rather than quarterly.

At the same time, Netanyahu is distributing money in the north, which is to receive NIS 1 billion. New neighborhoods will be built in Kiryat Shmona over the next three years, the prime minister promised.

But despite the spotlight on the prime minister, Hebrew University economist David Levhari believes that Netanyahu is not alone in putting populism at the center of his campaign. The 1999 election will not be the first to be held following a round of government spending, he adds. "That's been the case in every election since the founding of the state," he said, noting Labor's 1994-96 agreements on increased wages and pensions in the public sector.

"We've still not seen the start of real election economics," Levhari said. "It doesn't happen overnight. What we're seeing at the moment is the expectation of something that's not yet happened. It's clear that some of this is just propaganda, but on the other hand some things really



Netanyahu's belt-loosening measures include the NIS 750 million nursery plan, a NIS 1 billion aid package for northern communities and consideration of a NIS 10 billion public housing law.

will be done."

THE steps being taken by the Treasury, are, for the most part, a mere loosening of the belt that Netanyahu kept tightly buckled during his first two years in office. Netanyahu says his frugality was the direct result of Labor's fiscal mismanagement, particularly between 1994 and 1996.

'We've still not seen the start of real election economics'

—Economist David Levhari

"People come to me with claims of election economics," he said. "The Labor Party came with these claims, yet it wasted billions on all sorts of 'family members.' I've got nothing against the kibbutzim or Histadrut but [the party] covered all the debilitating deficits of the Histadrut. This is not what I'm doing here."

Netanyahu's criticism of Labor's fiscal management echoed that of his predecessors in the Finance Ministry, Yaakov Neeman and Dan Meridor. Meridor, in particular, made huge inroads in the budget deficit bequeathed him by the Labor government – cutting the budget by as much as NIS 7.2 billion in a single year.

Labor chairman Ehud Barak however, said that the Likud ministers were presenting a skewed picture.

In 1992, then prime minister Yitzhak Rabin inherited a deficit of NIS 17b, and cut it to NIS 15b, according to Barak. Barak promis-

es, that if elected, he will reduce the deficit to NIS 8b. during his first term and then down to NIS 4b, if reelected. Cutting the deficit is a continual process, he said, one which involves a forward-looking approach – not attacking previous governments.

Barak, like Netanyahu, also has an economics platform, one that was drawn up in November and that is based on one key theme – giving.

Once in office Barak will, according to the plan:

- increase spending on the basket of health services without demanding additional payments from patients;
- add some 80,000 hours to the elementary-school year;
- work towards free education for all children aged four and up (this proposal was undermined by Netanyahu earlier this week, with his free nursery-school proposal);
- increase grants and loans to students;
- increase national insurance child-benefit payments for working women with children under six;
- introduce a tax reform based on reducing the tax burden on the middle classes;
- introduce extra spending by private bodies in the public sector to the tune of NIS 10b.;
- increase support for factories and small businesses through the capital investment aid scheme and government-backed loan funds.

These measures would be funded by taking more than NIS 4b. away from Netanyahu's "family," the West Bank and Gaza settlers and haredim.

But it's not just Barak and Netanyahu who are jumping on the economic-goodies bandwagon. The war between Geshet and

Shas for the votes of the socially weak is well documented, but others, too, are trying to squeeze money out of the Treasury for the as-yet-unpassed 1999 state budget. The National Religious Party, for example, has, for the last two years, tried to take on the mantle of "the party most concerned with the need to improve the quality of education."

OF COURSE, manipulating the economy at election time is not unique to Israel. Governments all over the world move from belt-tightening during their first years in power to a spending spree once elections loom on the horizon. But this time elections have kind of snuck up on the politicians, and manipulation will be kept at a minimum, says economist Levhari.

"Because this election is so early, just four months away, they won't be able to implement too much election economics," said Levhari.

"The population will begin to feel it's election economics time when specific sectors receive something as a gift," he added. At the same time, voters will feel the pinch when the new government has to close its purse.

In the end, the public may gain from coalitionary election economics, says former state budget director Yoram Gabbai, now the chairman of Peilim Portfolio Management. A higher-than-expected public-sector pay settlement may be reached and some spending programs being brought forward, he projected.

But Gabbai believes that the election economics will not radically affect the economy one way or another, since any deviation on the fiscal front is likely to be offset by the Bank of Israel's monetary policy. "This will keep a check on the Treasury," said Gabbai.

OPROEP AAN ALLE NEDERLANDERS IN HET BUITENLAND

Europese Parlementsverkiezingen 10 juni 1999

Op 10 juni 1999 zullen de verkiezingen voor het Europees Parlement worden gehouden. Iedere stemgerechtigde Nederlander kan aan deze verkiezingen deelnemen, ook als hij of zij in het buitenland woont. Dat wil zeggen dat iedereen met de Nederlandse nationaliteit, ongeacht zijn of haar woonplaats, van 18 jaar of ouder in principe kan deelnemen.

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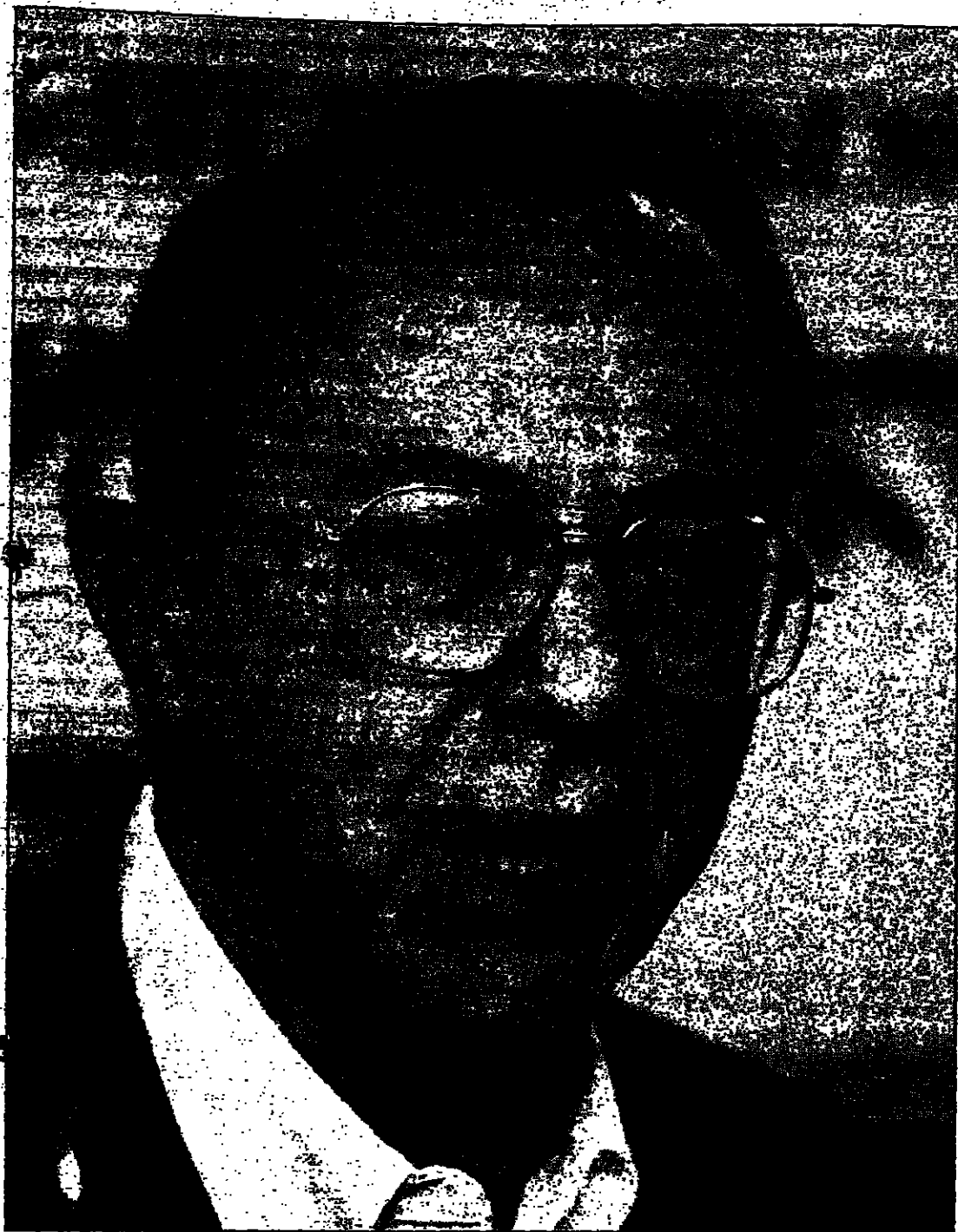


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A prodigal father challenges his son



Arens announces his bid for the Likud leadership this week.

No one expects Moshe Arens, who brought Binyamin Netanyahu into public life, to actually win the Likud leadership primary. But confidants say the depth of his disgust with the premier is evident from the fact that he's running at all, Larry Derfner writes



Netanyahu's father, Benzion, was once Arens's boss and a witness at his wedding.



Arens, the mentor, with his protege, Binyamin Netanyahu, at a Likud rally in 1988

Moshe Arens is always the gentleman. He will not say anything harsh in public about his former protégé, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

A couple of months ago, when TV cameras caught an unwitting President Ezer Weizman slapping the prime minister in conversation with Arens — "Nobody can stand him," Weizman said — Arens just stood there.

He didn't agree with the president. But he didn't disagree, either.

In declaring his candidacy on Monday for the leadership of the Likud, Arens's gentlemanly demeanor took on a sting, as he damned Netanyahu with faint praise.

"He was an excellent [US Embassy] deputy chief of mission. He was an excellent ambassador to the UN — maybe the best Israel ever had — he was a good deputy foreign minister, and he did the near-impossible by defeating Shimon Peres for prime minister in 1996," Arens said.

And after 1996, as prime minister, Arens, who was Netanyahu's boss in the US Embassy and Foreign Ministry, just chuckled and said this wasn't the time to discuss the subject.

Asked later if he had anything good to say about the prime minister, he chuckled again and replied, "I said he won the last election. That's pretty good."

It has become clear enough that the 73-year-old Arens, once a great admirer of Netanyahu's now considers him a glaring example of the Peter Principle, which states that people rise to their level of incompetence.

A SOURCE close to Arens said part of his motivation for returning to politics and challenging Netanyahu is that "he feels bad about having brought Bibi into politics. He's very disappointed in the man."

Another source connected with Arens said the reason he isn't giving full voice to that disappointment is because he has to face 160,000 Likud voters in the January 25 primary.

"They won't take it so well if Arens starts running Bibi down," said the source.

Arens, who quit politics immediately after the Likud lost the 1992 election, decided to run this time after his polls showed him getting some 25% of the Likud vote. He stationed himself to Netanyahu's political right, saying he had opposed the Hebron Accord because it endangered the lives of Jewish settlers, and said the Wye agreement weakened national security because Israel would have to withdraw from parts of the Judean desert.

Arens is given virtually no chance of topping Netanyahu, who has decisive control over the party and great popularity on the Likud "street." Yet the significance

of Arens's candidacy is not in how big a challenge he poses to Netanyahu at the polls, but rather that he is challenging Netanyahu at all.

Arens is Netanyahu's political godfather. In his news conference, Arens acknowledged that their relationship had been "almost like that of father and son."

He plucked Netanyahu out of a job as marketing director for Rim Furniture in 1982, made him his deputy at the US Embassy, and Netanyahu — with Arens helping him along — took it from there.

In an interview in July 1993 — a year after Arens left politics and a few months after Netanyahu had been elected Likud chairman — he praised Netanyahu to the skies.

"Of all the candidates [for prime minister] I can see, either in Labor or Likud, I think he's the best by a long shot. I won't tell you my doubts about him because I think he's the best, and it's all relative."

"I don't see that he has any disadvantages. I think he's smart, I think he has leadership ability, I think he knows the problems in the region, he knows the history, I think he's realistic about the Middle East — unlike many other Israelis — and I think he knows how to communicate his ideas to Israelis and to people outside the country," Arens said.

In an interview that same month, Netanyahu spoke with equal regard about Arens, saying their partnership had been "a natural meeting of the minds. It wasn't just a personal connection, it was philosophical."

Asked when he decided to run for the Likud chairmanship, Netanyahu replied, "I remember very clearly when I made the decision. It was after Misha's [Arens's] resignation. I wouldn't have entered the race if he were in it."

After Arens's announcement this week, Netanyahu made light of it, saying he "welcomed" the competition as a good thing for Likud democracy.

But Arens said that when he gave Netanyahu one day's advance notice of his declaration, the prime minister "wasn't happy about it."

Netanyahu's spokesman did not return calls asking for comment.

AT HIS news conference, Arens said that, unlike other prime ministerial candidates, he would not make campaign issues out of Netanyahu's credibility or character.

"I think Dan Meridor and Benny Begin made a serious mistake in steering the campaign away from the crucial issue, which is whether this country should be led by the Likud's program or by Labor's," he said.

But those close to Arens said he was just being circumspect, and that privately he speaks of Netanyahu's professional ethics

in the same scathing manner as Meridor, Begin or any of the prime minister's critics on the Left.

"Moshe Arens is a man with ethics, norms, a sense of fairness, of morality, and he cannot abide this undemocratic, brutal political machine that Netanyahu has created," said a source.

Asked when the breaking point for Arens had come, the source said, "It wasn't any one thing, it was an accumulation of things — the Bar-On Affair, Pavilion 28 [a code word for the infamous Likud convention in November 1997], the lies, the fights, the broken promises, the hooliganism, the gangsterism."

At the Likud central committee meeting in March 1997, when Netanyahu was under pressure in the Bar-On Affair, Arens asked to speak but was turned down by the organizers, who crafted the event into a raucous show of strength for Netanyahu, in which critics of the prime minister were angrily shouted down.

Arens again was denied the opportunity to speak at the Likud convention following Netanyahu's signing of the Wye Memorandum. Yet in 1993, Arens leaped eagerly to Netanyahu's defense against charges from Likud veterans that the new chairman was freezing them out, and running a "dictatorship" with the aid of assistants who were loyal only to him.

"That's just a bunch of nonsense," Arens said. "He was elected in the primaries, and he's running the Likud according to the party constitution. Does the president of the United States bring his enemies into the gov-

ernment, is it 'dictatorial' if he doesn't do that?"

ARENS'S ties with the Netanyahu family go back a half-century, and are based not only on their shared Revisionist background, but also on their abiding belief in the tactical importance of information campaigns in the US.

In the late '40s, Arens worked under the prime minister's father, Prof. Benzion Netanyahu, when the latter ran the Revisionist office in the US and spent much of his time lobbying Congress for the nascent Jewish state. A few years later Arens ran into his ex-boss in Jerusalem, and the professor served as a witness at Arens's wedding later same day.

Binyamin Netanyahu's relationship with Arens began in the late 1970s, after Netanyahu's older brother Yonatan's death at Entebbe in 1976 led him into public life.

Netanyahu spoke with Arens about mounting a hard-line anti-terror information campaign in the US. It was Netanyahu's organization of the 1979 Jonathan Institute anti-terror conference in Jerusalem, which drew George Bush, George Shultz and a host of other political leaders, that impressed Arens enough to offer Netanyahu the job of deputy in the US Embassy.

Arens was asked in 1993 to describe Netanyahu personally, to offer any impressions or anecdotes that would illuminate the man's character. He begged off, saying that in their work together, they didn't discuss personal things; that this was an irrelevant issue to him.

Given his long history with the

Netanyahu family, Arens said one thing that showed how true this was. Asked what he knew of Netanyahu's upbringing in Jerusalem, Arens replied, "I don't think the family is originally from Jerusalem. If I'm not mistaken,

they're from Netanya." The Netanyahu family is, in fact, from Jerusalem, and that's where Binyamin Netanyahu grew up. Yet Arens, whose says his relationship with Netanyahu "was almost like that of father and

son," didn't know even that much about him. Since Netanyahu took over as prime minister, this "father" sounds like he's been asking himself if he ever really knew this "son" at all.

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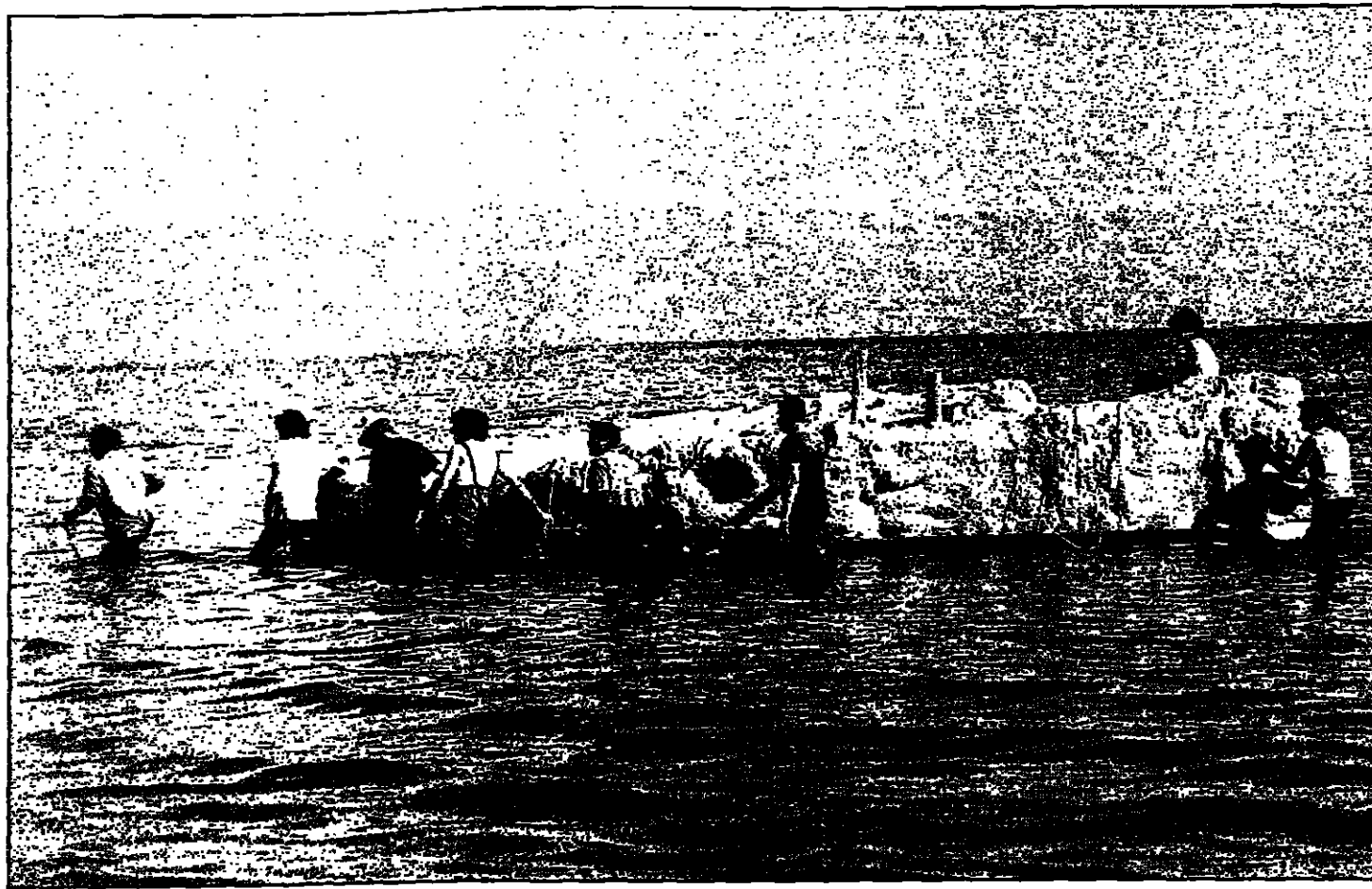
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The so-called 'Jesus Boat' being hoisted out of Lake Kinneret in 1988. The builder would probably have been amused by the furor his rough handiwork would create two millennia later.

'Jesus Boat' causes ripples

The resurrection, as could be expected in these awkward times, has become mired in bureaucracy.

The resurrection in this case is of the 2,000-year-old 'Jesus Boat,' excavated 13 years ago on the shores of Lake Kinneret. It was an astonishing emergence from the tomb of a vessel that may have plied the waters of the Sea of Galilee in Jesus' time. Publicity-wise, however, it proved but a minor miracle. While sailing trips aboard replicas of the 'Jesus Boat,' built by enterprising tourism operators, have become highly popular with Christian visitors to the Kinneret, only 70,000 persons a year come to see the original boat at the Yigal Alon Museum at Kibbutz Ginosar on the lake shore.

A grander fate was planned for it by the Israel Antiquities Authority which negotiated the boat's display in the halls of the Vatican next year, Holy Year, where millions would see it. The boat was to return after three months to its native shore with worldwide awareness of its existence and, hopefully, the blessings of the pope, ensuring its future as a major pilgrimage attraction.

"It would be good for the Vatican and good for Israel," said Amir Drori, chairman of the Antiquities Authority, on Tuesday. "The boat is an important cultural treasure, not just our own culture but world culture." However, the following day the project was apparently dashed when the Vatican informed Israel's ambassador to the Holy See that it had decided not to exhibit the boat. The Vatican gave no reason for its change of mind but Antiquities Authority officials

The 2000-year-old boat found at the bottom of Lake Kinneret was to start the new millennium on display at the Vatican. Not any more. **Abraham Rabinovitch** reports on the latest dispute in the history of a simple fishing vessel

believe it was a direct result of the opposition to the boat's journey voiced earlier in the week by Israeli political figures and conservationists. They warned that the trip could endanger the fragile vessel. There were objections as well to the boat's absence for three months during the millennial period when Israel itself hopes to draw mass pilgrimage. "It's plain why they canceled it," said an authority official. "They read about this dispute in the home country and say 'why get involved?'"

THE veteran boatwright who cobbled together the eight-meter-long fishing boat would probably have been amused by the furor his rough handiwork would create two millennia later. According to an American expert, Prof. J. Richard Steffy, he was a professional boat builder who had learned his trade on the Mediterranean but had adapted the techniques used there to the calmer waters of the lake and to the crude materials available. The boatwright used timber of inferior quality salvaged from other boats. In the course of time, the boat required extensive repairs. The

quality of wood used for these was no better than that used originally.

The boat's bottom was nearly flat, permitting it to be used for fishing close to the shore. The net kept on the large stern deck would have been dropped into shallow waters and then pulled ashore by ropes attached to it.

The shallow-draft design was similar to that employed by pirate ships in the Mediterranean which could escape pursuit by larger craft and be easily beached. The completed boat was smeared with pitch brought from the Dead Sea, the nearest source. A square sail was provided on the single mast, but the boat could also be rowed—the four rowers sitting in staggered order.

The craft may have been built at nearby Migdal, which was a boat-building center at the time. It had probably been ordered by a Jewish family, since the lake was ringed by Jewish settlements. Built from junked boats, the vessel ended its life as junk. Stripped in a boat graveyard of its mast, its deck and other usable parts, the hull was pushed out into the lake where it sank into a time warp. It was swiftly covered by

mud which prevented bacteria from eating away at the wood. Surfacing 2,000 years later, it was threatened with rapid disintegration if its waterlogged cells dried out. The vessel had to be inserted into a chemical bath for seven years before it could be exposed to air once again.

The boat's humble construction does not diminish its value as a historic relic. Vatican patronage would doubtless have added to its image as a quasi-religious relic as well. Much of Jesus' ministry was spent on the lake shore with fishermen. There can be no evidence that Jesus ever laid eyes on the boat—nor, of course, that he didn't—but he would have seen boats on the lake that were very similar. The wood cut for the boat has been dated to 40 BCE, plus or minus 80 years, by Carbon-14 testing. Since the wood used in the "Jesus Boat" was taken from junked boats, it would have been built somewhat later. Jesus preached in the area around 30 CE.

NEGOTIATIONS on the Vatican exhibit began three years ago, says Jacob Fisch, director of the Antiquities Authority's program of traveling exhibits. The Authority had already participated in an exhibition of Dead Sea Scrolls in the Vatican library. The talks this time were held not with the Vatican but with an organization, Palazzo Grassi, which carries out cultural programs for the Fiat auto company. "They have excellent relations with the Vatican," says Fisch. "We discussed an exhibition on the archeology of the Holy Land at the Vatican in the year 2000, when they're expecting 30 million pilgrims."

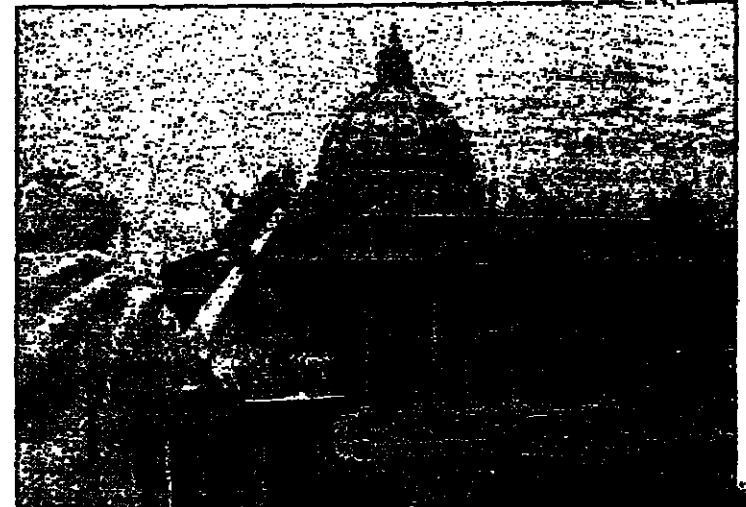


The fragile wooden craft had to be kept in a chemical bath for seven years before it could be exposed to air.

Among the possible exhibition items discussed was an ossuary found a few years ago in Jerusalem inscribed with the name of Caiaphas, the high priest before whom Jesus was brought the night before his crucifixion. Another possibility was a stone marker found at Caesarea bearing the name of Pontius Pilate. "In the end, the decision was to base the exhibition on one major object—the boat," says Fisch. According to Authority officials, Fiat was to invest \$1.5 million in the project, including the construction of a cradle for the boat that could be used after its return to the Yigal Alon museum as well.

Opposition to the boat's journey was voiced by both the Ministry of Education, in whose domain the Antiquities Authority lies, and the Ministry of Tourism—which in protest suspended construction of the new exhibition hall it is building at the museum to house the boat.

Drori hoped, however, that the government would, upon further consideration, conclude that the Vatican exhibition would be good for Israel's image and for tourism to Israel. He said that Italian and American experts have given assurances that the boat would not be damaged by the flight to Rome if it were carefully encased.



The Vatican: If the boat does not go to the pope, there is a chance that the pope might come to it. (UPI)

The boat would be away from January to March, low tourism months, but be back before Easter. It would then remain at home "forever," he said, in its elevated new status.

The director of the Yigal Alon museum, Nitzan Kaplan, admitted to being of two minds about it. "Drori is right about the publicity and the increase in the number of visitors we're likely to have here afterwards, but I'm still afraid the boat might be damaged. If it were up to me, I would

prefer not to see it go."

If the boat does not go to the pope, there is a chance that the pope might come to it. A papal visit to the Holy Land in the coming year is a possibility. "It depends on his health and the health of the peace process," says Msgr. Eugene Nugent, first secretary of the Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem.

Fisch remains hopeful that second thoughts will permit the boat's journey as planned. "We've still got a year," he noted.

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Invitation to Submit Offers for the Purchase of Ownership Rights in a Building Plot in Ganei Hadar

- Bids are invited by the undersigned executor of the estate of the late Moshe Eskolski for the purchase of ownership rights in private building plot in Ganei Hadar, Parcel 88, Bloc 3708, whose area is registered as 2,086 sq. m.
- Bids for the purchase of all or part of the rights should be submitted in writing not later than February 11, 1999 at 12 noon to the address given below, together with a bank check or bank guarantee made out to the undersigned for an amount equal to 5 percent of the offer. The text of the agreement to be signed by the bidder can be perused at the office of the undersigned or can be requested by mail.
- The value of the property as of November 8, 1998 has been fixed at \$320,000 (Three hundred twenty thousand dollars) by a qualified assessor.
- The undersigned and the estate, together or separately, will not be responsible for the planning conditions of the plot, its purpose, possibilities and conditions of its use and utilization. These must be checked by the bidder himself.
- The undersigned does not undertake to accept the highest or any other bid and reserves the right to conduct negotiations separately at any stage with any bidder or bidders, or to hold an auction among the bidders and/or to publish additional invitations for offers, with or without conditions.
- The sale will be subject to court approval.
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South Africa's journey to the sun

We must learn the necessity of reconciliation, says the man who dismantled apartheid, former South African president F.W. de Klerk in an interview with Thomas O'Dwyer

F.W. de Klerk, the last white president of South Africa for the foreseeable future, is convinced that leaders in regions of conflict can learn much from his country's journey to democracy, but for the moment he wants to learn something from Israel.

De Klerk was among 350 distinguished foreigners — including several other Nobel Peace laureates — from a total of 32 countries, who poured into Tel Aviv this week for the second annual meeting of the international board of governors of the Peres Center for Peace.

De Klerk said he soon plans to open a similar institute in South Africa dedicated to reconciliation. "I am on the verge of launching this foundation and I want to call it the Center for Reconciliation in South Africa, but it also will have wider aims for sub-Saharan Africa," de Klerk said as he took a break in a private corner of the Dan Hotel from the packed conference schedule and the crush of celebrity-hunting media.

"I can learn valuable lessons from the Peres Center, and I am impressed by what already has been achieved, although for obvious reasons my foundation will not necessarily be modeled on the Peres Center," he continued. "But my former director general of the president's office will pay a visit to the Peres Center in a week or two's time to see what we can learn."

The center was inaugurated with an equally glittering gathering by former prime minister Shimon Peres in 1997 and, like that now planned by de Klerk, it follows a tradition already set by such statesmen as Jimmy Carter and Mikhail Gorbachev of spreading their visions of a new future by sponsoring global cooperative causes.

The peace center is an apolitical vehicle for Peres's unfazed vision of a New Middle East in a global village of civilized neighbors — "a gathering of optimists," Peres called this week's three-day conference.

The center's focus is mainly economic and professional — it nurtures projects among engineers, lawyers, doctors, and businessmen from both sides of the suspicion-ridden Israeli-Arab divide.

"An economy does not belong to any particular government," Peres told the conference which included 150 Arab invitees. "It is private, and public, and can really do a job to reform, hope and create a new future for the Middle East."

De Klerk agreed that when the work of leaders and politics is done, it is hard economic facts that make



Visiting the Peres Center for Peace this week were Archbishop Desmond Tutu (left) and former South African president F.W. de Klerk, who wants to establish a similar center for reconciliation in his country.



(Brian Henderson)

or break new national ventures in the modern world. "Look at South Africa — it has not resolved all its problems," he said. "We laid very good foundations, good agreements, and with the elections we reached a very good start. But all the problems will not disappear because of that... none of the major steps that I took [to abolish apartheid] have I any regrets about. But there are certain red lights flashing and there are certain challenges which demand serious attention."

"On the economic front, we need to create jobs at a much faster rate — we have an extremely high unemployment rate, our economy needs to grow at 5-6 percent and it's only growing at around 3 percent. We need further new dynamic steps to resolve that."

"Our crime rate is much too high," he said. "There is much too much

corruption at the moment. Affirmative action has been applied by the new government in an unbalanced way; this has resulted in a loss of managerial expertise which we could ill afford. So I'm critical of many things which have been done, but the problems which we have, although they are big problems, can be resolved by good government, good management and doing the right thing at the right time."

It was put to him that it's all very well for retired statesmen to wander the world proffering advice, but how did he take advice from foreigners when he was in power?

"Advice was helpful when it became constructive," he replied decisively, after a pause for reflection. "Once I succeeded in winning confidence, once my credibility was accepted — that I meant what I was saying and would keep my promises — it changed. It was left to me — I

got to talk but not to be pushed, and that I found very helpful."

"In the pre-period, when we were facing isolation in South Africa, quite often the sanctions and the stringent discipline which the international community applied were actually counterproductive and at times — before I became president — even delayed change in South Africa."

So what could South African leaders now contribute to the Middle East peace process? De Klerk first pointed out that it was Peres who invited him to become a governor of the peace center: "I got to know him quite well during my presidency — I listened to a few of his speeches, he listened to a few of mine — and I have great respect for him."

"Secondly, I think I can make a contribution. Yes, comparisons are odious and the situation here is quite different from the situation we have to deal with in South Africa, but there are also lessons to be drawn from our experience across the world and here also, and I can share those lessons."

"Even here [in the Middle East], there is some similarity. We are an extremely culturally diverse country with 11 official languages. But in our case, religious differences don't have the same importance as they do here, so your situation, from a multicultural and ethnic point of view, is actually less complex than ours... What is necessary to avoid in our society is falling back from time to time into ethnic conflict, into tensions, into minorities feeling excluded. Solving that type of problem we can learn from each other."

When a long-term conflict is tackled, de Klerk said, the first basic agreements are the crucial first step, but this is also only one milestone in a process.

"In the post-agreement period there are many pitfalls — as we have discovered. We stepped into some of them, we avoided many of them. But the experiences we have in implementing agreements, and the necessity for leading figures to forge important relationships, these can be shared. These things ensure that on both sides there is adherence, that both deal with deviations and the unavoidable snags."

"It will happen always that, although you have agreed on something, somewhere in the power base of one of the parties something goes wrong, and there is a breach of the agreement. How to deal with that is where we've had many experiences. That we can share... the South African experience can be properly analyzed, there are many lessons to be learned from it with relevance to the Israel-Palestinian situation."

Referring to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigation into the crimes of the apartheid era committed by all sides, de Klerk said: "I think everyone could learn from our experience the necessity of reconciliation and the necessity of dealing effectively with the problems of the past. If it is not dealt with satisfactorily, it can lead to new bitterness."

"In our case, it is one issue where I do not think we have succeeded successfully — that's the reason I plan to start the center for reconciliation, because I think much more needs to be done. How do you deal with people who have been sentenced, who have been put in jail, who have been taken to court during a past conflict?"

In an oblique reference to the worries of South Africa's whites, who were once the masters and are now just another minority, de Klerk added: "And then — what do you do

with cultural minorities in a new situation? How do you make them feel that they are not repressed, that they have room and breathing space? That is part of reconciliation."

Asked about his view of President Nelson Mandela's deputy and heir apparent, Thabo Mbeki, de Klerk said "on economics, I'm happy about him, he's committed to the right economic policies. I am worried that he's made speeches which are still too much black-and-white speeches, and too little non-racial speeches."

For two years De Klerk was co-deputy president with Mbeki in the national unity government before South Africa's first elections.

Ironically, it seemed that Nobel Peace winner de Klerk had some unfinished reconciliation of his own to do during his visit to Israel. Also attending the Peres Center events was the ebullient Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with whom de Klerk has been at loggerheads.

Tutu is the anti-apartheid campaigner of heroic humanity for whom the word charisma might have been invented. During his visit he was mobbed at every step by the insatiable media.

As chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Tutu attempted to hold de Klerk responsible, in the commission's report issued last October, for knowing about state-sponsored bombings of a church and civic offices during the government's fight against the African National Congress. De Klerk won a court order to have the half-page indictment blacked out in the report and the case is still in the hands of lawyers.

De Klerk vociferously denies prior knowledge of the bombings by diehards in his last white government. He is determined that his name will go down unscathed in history as the man who dismantled apartheid.

However, he made light of his legal wrangle with Tutu. "On a personal basis my relations with all the new leaders are good," he said. "Archbishop Tutu and I are in court against each other on the basis of what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission wanted to issue as a finding, and there we have indeed had our clashes."

"However, I will see him here at the conference and have a cup of coffee with him. We are still on speaking terms, but I would like to have a quiet one-on-one with him and will create such an opportunity."

Several hours later, in the magnificent main auditorium of the Tel Aviv Opera, de Klerk was present as Tutu moved a capacity audience between rapt silence or thunderous applause with his renowned oratory.

"You think you can realize how evil we can be," said Tutu in his rolling African vowels, "but — his voice dropped to a whisper — "then you find worse."

"And then, when you have lost hope, you see the incredible capacity of people to be good... With truth, there is reconciliation, with reconciliation, hope. If it can happen to us, where there was the biggest most awful and hopeless mess, it can happen to you in Palestine."

He said South Africa's long journey was as if it had decided to join the space race and pilot a spaceship, not to the moon like others, but to the sun.

"Everyone says you are crazy, you will burn up, I say no. We are not stupid in South Africa. We will go by night."

Dry Bones



GRAPEVINE

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

In a thinly veiled reference to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's shaking himself free of his flak jacket recently, Herut leader Ze'ev (Benny) Begin quipped, as he removed his sweater at a parlor meeting at the home of Yael and David Medved: "I did not ask if you were all members of Likud. I think that some of you are not."



Benny Begin (Israel Sun)

SPEAKING OF Aura Herzog, she and her son Isaac were at the Hebrew University this week for the ceremony launching a new award established in memory of her husband, Israel's sixth president, Chaim Herzog.

The signing ceremony, held in the office of Hebrew University president Professor

Menachem Magidor, was also attended by Hebrew University Vice-President Moshe Arad, political scientists Shlomo Avineri and Herbert Samuel, and Nissan Limor, who was Beit Hanassi director-general during Herzog's tenure and is now director-general of the Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Council for Higher Education.

The award, a joint venture of Yael Chaim Herzog and the Hebrew University, will be presented biennially to an Israeli or foreign national who has made an outstanding contribution to the State of Israel in areas of security, law, justice and ethics; foreign relations; national unity and co-existence; communications or Israeli-Diaspora relations, all of which were of particular concern to Herzog throughout his lifetime.

Accompanying the award, which carries a cash grant, will be a research scholarship to a senior researcher at the Hebrew University working in the same area as the award winner. The first presentation of the award will be in March this year at Beit Hanassi.

PHILIPPINES ambassador and dean of the diplomatic corps Rosalinda de Perio-Santos had to rush home from Rafal's birthday bash to pack her bags for a women's tour that she is leading through Hong Kong, Bangkok and the Philippines. Among the diplomatic spouses who joined her was Nagwa Bassiouny, wife of Egyptian Ambassador Mohammed Bassiouny.

The tour includes meals, but Bassiouny, who is a Moslem, cannot eat until after nightfall because of Ramadan. While her friends dug into breakfast and lunch, Bassiouny had to abstain.

ONE of the happiest diplomats in Israel this week was Hungarian Ambassador Istvan Cséjtel, who was reunited with his wife, Ildiko, after a separation of nearly three months. A doting grandmother, Ildiko Cséjtel went back to Budapest in October, just as her daughter was giving birth. It was something she just had to do, and now she's ready to resume her role as a gracious hostess.

IF former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev stood for office in Israel, he would win hands down, judging by the enthusiastic reception he received from Russian immigrants whom he met at a reception hosted in his honor by Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai. Gorbachev appeared to be well informed as to how emigrants from the former Soviet Union are faring here, and had heard of the establishment of a new predominantly Russian party by Avigdor Lieberman. Many of the Russians who flocked to meet Gorbachev also attended a meeting with Lieberman on the same night.

Noting the ruckus at the Gorbachev affair, one of the Israeli guests commented that it was not surprising that *balagan* (the Hebrew word for chaos) actually originated in Russia.

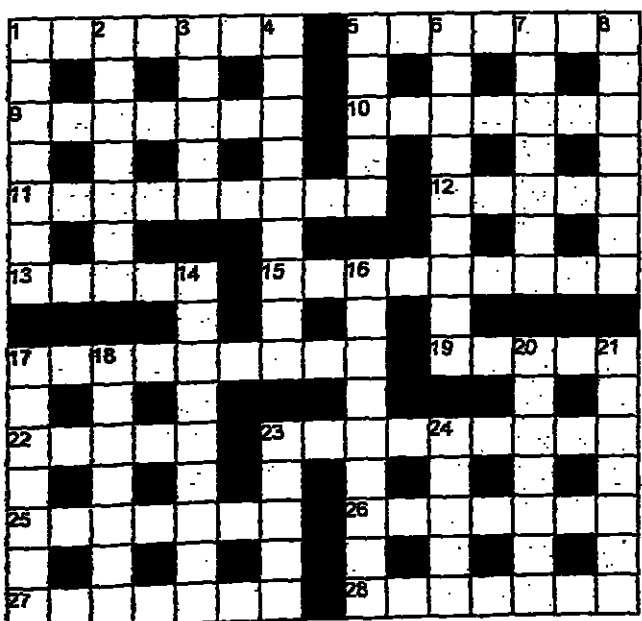
CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Keeper takes dog beside a hill (7)
 - Group conceals gear from robber (7)
 - A Frenchman pocketing classy ointment (7)
 - By dint of a street diversion, end up far away (7)
 - Vulgar squad makes vigorous onslaught (9)
 - Right everyone stretch! (5)
 - It's used by plastics producer to keep son in check (5)
 - Sadly, nice pets died on being examined (9)
 - Fellow worker makes officer join association (9)
 - Get smaller lighter (5)
 - Stress an addict usually concealed (5)

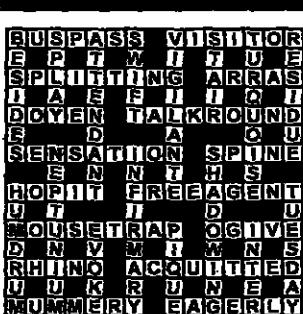
- Communicate successfully to buy a crucifix (3,6)
- False evidence by adjudicating panel (7)
- Eton was refurbished without difficulty (2,5)
- Initially, really jubilant, as reported (7)
- Husband has to join the forces again (7)

DOWN

- Nightspot habitue guilty of armed assault? (7)
- Ogres in destructive assault on large areas (7)
- Material of current worth in Scotland (5)
- Shopkeeper's job involves passing on gossip (9)
- Ordered to retain key symbol (5)



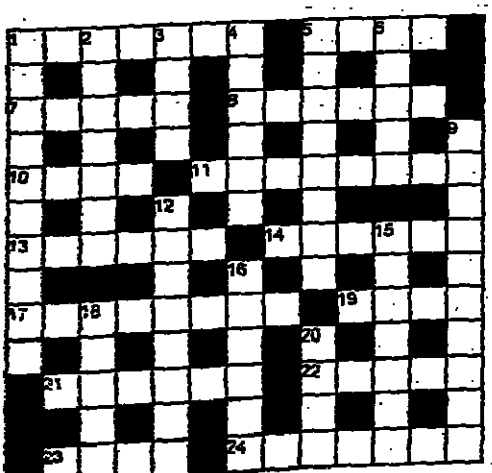
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DOWN: 1 Intact, 2 Drake, 3 Acts, 5 Ordinary, 6 Isobars, 7 Needed, 8 Braces, 18 Adherent, 19 Anction, 17 Gashed, 19 Stern, 19 Fridge, 22 Shift, 23 Cash.

QUICK CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- Climate (7)
 - Futile (4)
 - Hot punch (5)
 - Wooden hammer (6)
 - Heroic veras (4)
 - Southern US state (8)
 - Pakistani city (6)
 - Ex-students (6)
 - Dying of hunger (8)
 - Scrutinize (4)
 - Assault (6)
 - Saunter (5)
 - Nimble (4)
 - Mirror (7)
- DOWN**
- Passion for travel (10)
 - Torment (7)
 - Stockings, etc (4)
 - Comment (6)
 - Of much worth (6)
 - Articles (6)
 - Allotted task (10)
 - EC service book (6)
 - Gruesome (7)
 - Fisherman (6)
 - Greek Bible writer (5)
 - Young cow (4)



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HABITAT EXCLUSIVE REAL ESTATE, Unfurnished! Center, 2, 5450; Katsman, 4, 8500; Nakhlat, 2, quiet, central 5500; Nakhlat, 5, garden, 1,150. Tel. 02-561-1222. [20823]
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ELI, SHOMRON, VILLA, center, 6 rooms, terraces, garden, view. Tel. 050-355-888. [795554]

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GERMAN COLONY, 4 ROOMS, 1st floor, elevator, balcony, silent, parking, high standard. Tel. 02-645-1657. Tel. 02-645-1657. [20806]

GERMAN COLONY, SUPERB location, exclusive project, 120 sq.m. garden, covered parking, storeroom. CORINNE DAVAR. Tel. 02-673-3385. E-mail: corinne@netvision.net.il [20840]

GERMAN COLONY, PRIVATE house, 140 sq.m. + building permit for 70 sq.m. A.D.N. REALTY. Tel. 02-645-1657. Tel. 02-645-1657. [20806]

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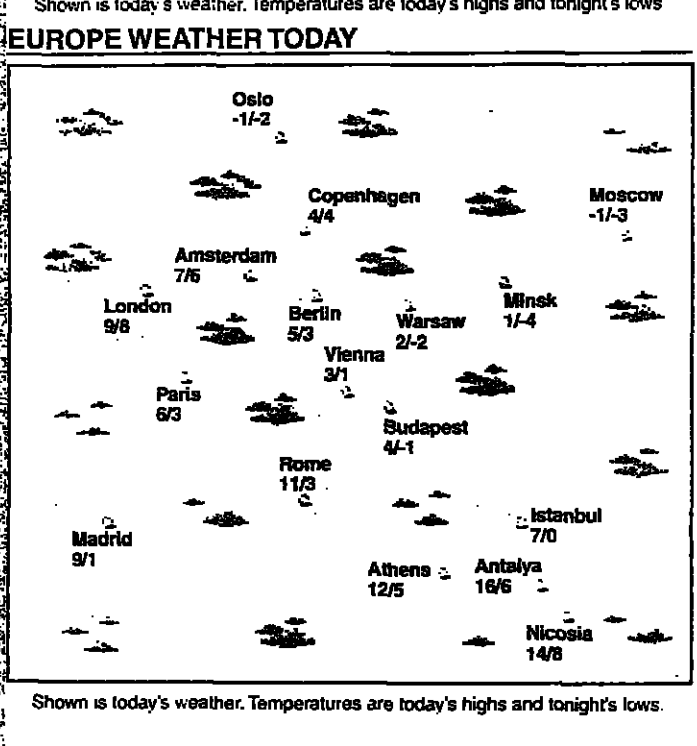
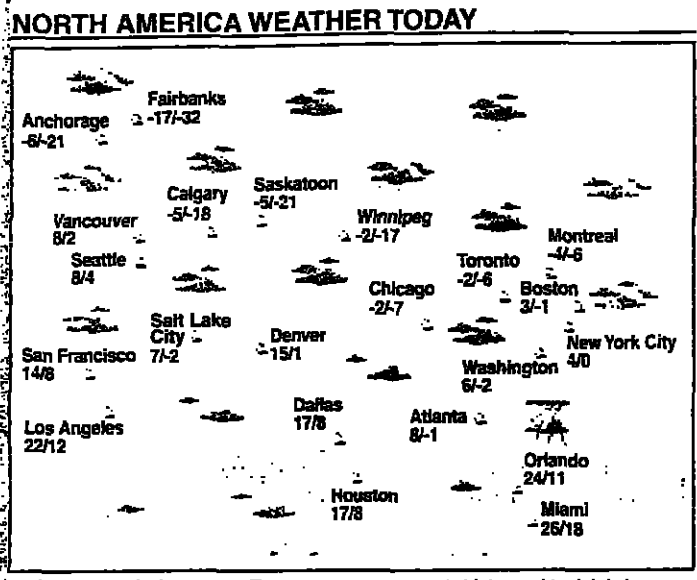
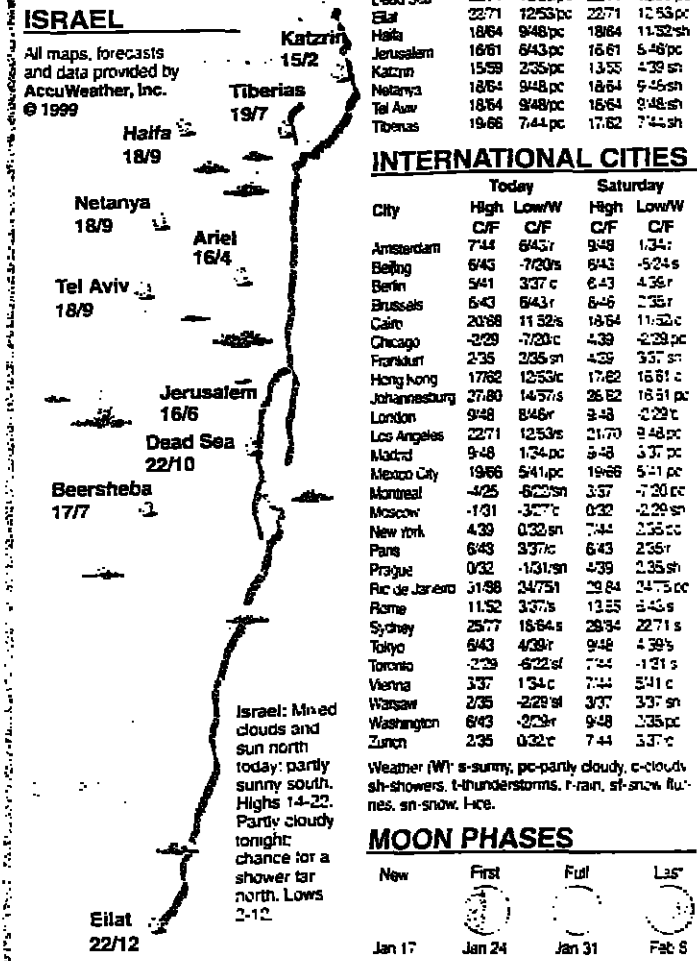
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FORD SESTIZA, 1992, automatic, small car, full extras, as new condition, guaranteed, excellent car. \$4,390. Call Mark anytime. Tel: 03-527-0621. 050-717-981. [794159]

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The new improved Pessah Handicrafts Fair

Having taken over a few months ago from Beverlee Black, I have also taken over the wonderful Pessah Handicrafts Fair that she started some 12 years ago.

The fair has become one of our great traditional fund-raising events as well as a first-class opportunity for friends and families to meet and enjoy a day out.

This year's fair will be bigger and better than ever. It will be held at Kibbutz Tror, near Beit Shemesh, on Monday April 5, Hol Hamad Pessah, and already over 100 craftspeople have registered for stalls. There is going to be much more entertainment for the kids and the kibbutz is arranging for tours of its winery, the milking parlor and the farm, including the petting corner.

Please put the date in your diary now, and we look forward to seeing all of our friends and supporters on the day.

We are blazing ahead on getting shoes for 480 children living in caravans at Givat Hamatos. Already you have donated NIS 1,567 towards the NIS 40,000 we need. Please keep up the good work. Rush your checks or phone your Visa donation for The Winter Shoes Mitzya to (02) 537-6528. The Jerusalem Post Funds, P.O.B. 81, 91000 Jerusalem. (Illie Feldman and Judy Aminoff).

Donors living in the United States wishing to receive tax benefits, can send their donations to: Friends of The Jerusalem Post Funds, c/o The Jerusalem Post, 401 North Wabash, Suite 521, Chicago, IL 60611. Please designate in your letter to which fund you wish to donate and write your message very clearly.

FORSAKE ME NOT

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NIS 180 in memory of Beverlee Black - Ruth Moore, Jern.

NIS 150 Judith Gobis's special birthday - Ju and Ma. Dullischer, Jerusalem. Anon., Ra'anana.

NIS 100 Anon. in loving memory of my dear husband, Dr. Lorenz Hirsch - Vared Hirsch, Herzliya Pituh.

NIS 50 in honor of Deborah and Mortie's 10th wedding anniversary - Dina. In loving memory of our parents - A. and M.K. Ashkelon. Anon., Beit

Shemesh. In memory of dear brother Meir Noy of Prof. Dov Noy - Roberta and Marc Saperstein, Arlington, VA.

\$5,000 The Gimpich Family Foundation, Inc., Hartford, CT.

\$500 Anon., NY. In memory of my beloved mother Frieda Epstein - Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Kantor, Boca Raton, FL.

\$300 Anon. In honor of our children, Dahiya, Jacob, Benjamin, Valerie and Derek - Laurel and Dennis Brown, Houston, TX. In honor of Israel's 50th anniversary and the Children of Israel - Martin, Debbie, Tamar and Danny Bell of Hamsburg, PA.

\$118 The members of the daily minyan at Rocky Mountain Hebrew Academy in Denver, Colorado.

\$100 in honor of our London grandson Samuel Nathan Sheldon - Gloria and Sheldon Horowitz, Tuckahoe, New York.

\$75 in memory of my parents, Simon and Molly Ruse - Mr. and Mrs. Arthur M. Toberman, Los Angeles.

\$54 in honor of the Robert Ackert Family - E. Hamilton, Nashua, NH.

\$50 in memory of my husband, David, and daughter, Naomi - Valerie J. Adelson, Kensington, CA.

\$50 in memory of my parents Simon and Molly Ruse - Mr. and Mrs. Arthur M. Toberman, Los Angeles.

\$54 ASDB, East Brunswick, NJ. Ms. Adrienne Marks, Washington, DC.

\$18 The Rosenzweig family, New York. In honor of the Frankenstein family of Fishon Lezion - Mr. Nat Kanarek, Flushing, NY.

\$36 Jen Fremont, West Palm Beach, FL. In honor of uncle Bernard Manashaw - Sarah, Rebecca, Joshua and Miriam Meyers, Potomac, MD. In honor of our children Daniel and Lisa Steinberg - Mark and Naomi Weintraub, New York.

\$20 in memory of our beloved teacher and friend, Audrey Schurgen - Kleinburg-Kalman Family, New York.

\$18 The Rosenzweig family, New York. In honor of my husband, David, and daughter, Naomi - Valerie J. Adelson, Kensington, CA.

\$10 Arlene E. Frayman, West Palm Beach, FL.

\$100 in loving memory of Monty Landy - from his family.

\$100 Anon., Jern. Shimon Marcus, Jern.

NIS 75 Lumbroso, Had Hasharon. \$500 Anon., Springfield, GA.

\$500 in memory of my beloved mother Frieda Epstein - Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Kantor, Boca Raton, FL.

NIS 65 S. Domb, Jern.

NIS 54 Anon.

NIS 50 in memory of my mother's yahrzeit - Zelda Portnoy, Haifa. Mott Borowski, Jern. H. Cherkov, Yeroham.

\$35 in honor of our children, Daniel and Lisa Steinberg - Mark and Naomi Weintraub, New York. Jen Fremont, West Palm Beach, FL.

\$18 Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Katz, Storms Mansfield, CT. The Rozmans, Storms Hills, NY.

\$10 Arlene Frayman, W. Palm Beach, FL.

\$25 Cohen, Jern.

\$10 Edward I. Marks, Netanyahu.

\$100 in loving memory of Monty Landy - from his family.

\$25 Cohen, Jern.

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IOC displays Samaranch gifts

LAUSANNE (Reuters) - The International Olympic Committee (IOC) yesterday exhibited gifts given to president Juan Antonio Samaranch and his predecessors, including Browning guns received from Salt Lake City officials.

The move to display openness came amid a vote-buying scandal which has led to calls this week from Australian and Canadian Olympic Games bidding-city officials for Samaranch, who has been at the helm of the IOC since 1980, to step down.

The Lausanne-published Swiss weekly, *L'Hebdo*, in its latest edition published yesterday, also asked in a front-cover story: "Samaranch: How long will he hang on?" The 77-year-old Spaniard, who has been in Barcelona this week, is due to return to the IOC headquarters in Lausanne today, according to Franklin Servan-Schreiber, the body's

deputy director of communications.

Salt Lake City, awarded the 2002 Winter Games four years ago, is embroiled in a bribery scandal which had led to the resignation of officials after bid chiefs admitted housing, travel and education costs for relatives of IOC members had been paid.

Veteran Swiss IOC official Marc Hodler touched off the storm last month by alleging corruption, saying cities bidding to stage the lucrative Games were offered votes en bloc for millions of dollars.

Canadian IOC member Dick Pound is investigating the scandal and is due to report on January 24.

Samaranch, whose term ends in 2000, acknowledged last week having received the firearms believed to be worth around \$2,000 but denied any wrongdoing. He said he was handing them over to the nearby Olympic Museum.

"Keep in mind that Mr. Samaranch does not have a vote and is not paid, he is a volunteer here," Servan-Schreiber told reporters and photographers gathered in a small makeshift storeroom near Samaranch's office to view the firearms.

"This is where we put things we don't know what to do with," he added, pointing to an odd collection of bric-a-brac.

The two engraved Browning guns lie amid the clutter, the rifle in its leather case with plush green velvet lining, and the 9mm pistol in a grey plastic case. Neither the weapons nor the instruction manuals appear to have been used.

IOC rules ban gifts worth more than \$150 to the 114 members who decide the venues of Games in a vote, or their relatives.

Samaranch is not one of these.

A short distance from his office along Lake

Geneva, the Olympic Museum houses most of the treasures linked to athletes' dreams since the movement began in 1894. Champions have donated autographed skis, track shoes and other gear used to win medals.

Since it opened in June 1993, more than a million visitors have viewed the display and tested their knowledge of sports trivia.

"We have tens of thousands of items, but only about 20 percent of the collection is ever on display. Most of it is here in the basement archives," said Jean-Francois Pahud, curator for the sprawling collection, who heads a team of 15 cataloguers.

Rows of locked, fire-proof cases line the underground archives. Row number 46 contains "Souvenirs of IOC Presidents".

"This is a sample of gifts to the president which we have taken out to show you," Servan-Schreiber told reporters there.

SPORTS

in brief

TA derby at center of Toto Cup action

Tomorrow's match between Maccabi and Hapoel Tel Aviv at the National Stadium, Ramat Gan is the centerpiece of weekend soccer action which is made up entirely of Toto Cup matches.

This weekend marks the second weekend of the league's mid-winter league break with both top divisions turning their attention to the Toto Cup.

In other National League Toto Cup action the lineups are: Maccabi Petah Tikva v. Hapoel Beit She'an, Hapoel Petah Tikva v. Bnei Yehuda, Ironi Rishon LeZion v. Bnei Yehuda, Hapoel Jerusalem v. Maccabi Jaffa, Hapoel Kfar Sava v. Hapoel Haifa, Ironi Ashdod v. Zefirum Holon and Maccabi Herzliya v. Maccabi Haifa.

Ori Lewis

Owners approve sale of Florida Marlins

CARLSBAD, Ca. (Reuters) - Baseball owners unanimously approved the sale of the Florida Marlins to commodities trader John Henry on Wednesday night.

The Marlins sale calls for Henry to pay a reported \$150 million in cash to Wayne Huizenga - who dismantled the team after winning the World Series in 1997 - and another \$8m to help refurbish Pro Player Stadium.

Henry has promised to make a serious effort to revive a team that dumped all of its high-priced talent after winning the 1997 World Series in just its fifth year of existence. Last year, the Marlins were 54-108, the worst record by a defending champion.

Steve Waugh ruled out of one-dayer

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Steve Waugh has been ruled out of Australia's limited-overs cricket match against England today because of continuing problems with injury.

The Australian one-day captain missed Australia's first two matches of the tri-series after straining his groin during the fifth Ashes Test.

Waugh was expected to return to the side for today's match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground but was told to rest a little longer for fear that he might aggravate the injury.

With Waugh unavailable, Shane Warne will continue leading the side. Australia lost their opening match of the series against England in Brisbane last Sunday before beating Sri Lanka in Sydney on Wednesday.

Waugh said he would definitely be back in time for Australia's fourth match against England in Sydney this Sunday.

Gunmen hold up 50 Dakar Rally competitors

PARIS (Reuters) - Mauritanian troops yesterday hunted high-way robbers fleeing across the Sahara desert after robbing about 50 Dakar Rally competitors at gunpoint, organizers said.

The drivers fell one after one into a trap set up by about 20 well-armed men 50 kms from the end of the 12th stage in Tichit, Mauritania, on Wednesday night.

The competitors were held for several hours until midnight, when the robbers made off with four cars, three trucks, a motorcycle, money and identity documents.

All the other vehicles had their fuel tanks emptied. French television said the robbers had stolen hundreds of thousands of francs. Drivers told French television the ambush was carried out with military precision and they suspected the robbers to be rebels from Mali.

French television said helicopters had spotted the robbers heading northeast for the Malian or Algerian border and Mauritanian troops were in pursuit.

Jaguars extend Coughlin contract

JACKSONVILLE (Reuters) - After leading the Jacksonville Jaguars to their first division title, coach Tom Coughlin was rewarded with a four-year contract extension through 2003.

The 52-year-old Coughlin has coached the Jaguars since their inception and guided them to the playoffs the last three years. The Jaguars are the first NFL expansion team to go to the playoffs three times in their first four seasons.

This season, Jacksonville won the AFC Central Division with an 11-5 record and defeated New England in the wild card round before losing to the New York Jets 34-24 last Sunday in the divisional playoffs.

Ford to coach Clippers

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Chris Ford became the new coach of the Los Angeles Clippers, hoping to turn around one of the NBA's worst franchises.

Ford, who was fired last summer by the Milwaukee Bucks after failing to make the playoffs in two seasons, says the postseason is his goal with the Clippers, who were 17-65 last season.

Last April, the Clippers fired Bill Fitch, who had spent four seasons with the club, guiding the Clippers to the playoffs in 1997.

Jordan to play Bob Hope Classic

LA QUINTA, Ca. (AP) - The next best place to see Michael Jordan in action will be on the PGA Tour.

On the day he retired from basketball, Jordan committed to play in the pro-am portion of the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic, organizers said Wednesday.

The tournament will be played January 20-24 on four courses in the Palm Springs area. Fred Couples is the defending champion. Jordan will be paired with longtime NBA buddy Charles Barkley, a free agent, and Roy Green, who used to play for the Arizona Cardinals.

Windies desperate to avoid whitewash

CENTURION, South Africa (Reuters) - West Indies will be under extreme pressure to avoid a 5-0 whitewash when the final Test against South Africa starts at Centurion Park today.

Having lost the first four Tests on this inaugural tour by West Indies of the Republic, Brian Lara's men are feeling the heat from their supporters in the Caribbean and from a South African team bent on ending the series in style with a fifth victory.

No South African team has won a series 5-0, the closest being the 4-0 triumph by Ali Bacher's side over Bill Lawry's Australians in 1969-70. Captain Hansie Cronje has said he wants to achieve that target in this series.

"Our most important preparation is mental," Lara said.

"It's very, very tough to be 4-0 down in a series, especially when it's the first time it has happened to any of the players."

"We know we still have to try and be positive, but I won't pretend that's easy."

Wretched batting by the top six and assorted injuries among the fast bowlers are the main reasons for their lack of success.

But off the field, the pre-tour dispute involving the West Indies Cricket Board still lingers, with reports filtering through of rifts within the touring party.

The upshot has been West Indies winning only two of the 13 matches they have played so far, and matters could easily worsen with seven one-day internationals scheduled to follow the Test series.

The ruthlessly efficient South Africans have rarely been challenged in cruising to four emphatic victories.

The only problem the triumphant South Africans have is an injury doubt over their world No. 1 fast bowler Allan Donald. South African cricket's most prolific wicket-taker also left the field in the third test and missed the fourth.

He was due to test his injured hamstring yesterday but if he is declared unfit, Lance Klusener will make his return to Test cricket following the ankle injury which forced him out of South Africa's tour of England last year.

Teams: South Africa: Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Daryll Cullinan, Hansie Cronje (captain), Jonty Rhodes, Shaun Pollock, Mark Boucher, Allan Donald (for Lance Klusener), David Tredwell, Paul Adams. 12th-man: Andrew White.

West Indies: (captain) Darren Ganga, Phil Wallace, Brian Lara (captain), Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Carl Hooper, Stuart Williams, Floyd Reifer, Ridley Jacobs, Walter Mitchell, Ravin Lewis, Curtly Ambrose, Mervyn Dillon, Franklin Rose, Josiah Marry, Clayton Lambert, Keith Armitage, Keith Symple, Ross King, Neil McKenzie.

College Basketball Top 25

1. Connecticut (14-1) did not play.

2. Duke (16-1) beat Wake Forest 81-72.

3. Cincinnati (15-0) did not play.

4. Stanford (15-0) did not play.

5. Maryland (16-2) beat No. 9 North Carolina 89-72.

6. Kentucky (14-4) did not play.

7. Arizona (11-1) did not play.

8. Auburn (16-0) beat Mississippi 74-58.

9. North Carolina (14-4) lost to No. 5 Maryland 89-72.

10. UCLA (13-3) did not play.

11. St. John's (14-3) did not play.

12. Iowa (15-0) did not play.

13. Purdue (14-3) beat Wichita 81-64.

14. Michigan State (13-4) beat No. 10 Minnesota 71-63.

15. Kansas (12-3) did not play. Next: at Michigan State (12-4) beat San Jose State 82-67.

16. Kansas State (12-3) beat San Jose State 82-67.

17. Villanova (15-0) beat Penn State 81-58.

18. Syracuse (11-3) did not play.

19. Michigan (10-3) lost to No. 14 Michigan State 71-63.

20. Texas Christian (13-2) did not play.

21. Ohio State (12-4) did not play.

22. Cincinnati (15-0) beat Wake Forest 81-72.

23. Indiana (14-3) beat Northwestern 81-78.

24. Arkansas (12-2) beat Wake Forest 81-72.

25. Clemson (12-3) did not play.

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Rangers post OT win in New York derby

NEW YORK (AP) - Adam Graves scored with 1:52 left in overtime to give the New York Rangers a 4-3 victory over the struggling New York Islanders on Wednesday.

The Rangers took the lead in the third period, then lost it in regulation before Graves won it with the help of a great pass by Wayne Gretzky.

Ulf Samuelsson and Petr Nedved also scored for the Rangers.

Mark Lawrence, Mariusz Czerkawski and Kenny Jonsson scored for the Islanders, whose winless streak reached nine games (0-8-1).

Flyers 3, Capitals 0

Visiting Philadelphia tied a franchise record with its fourth-straight shutout and extended its unbeaten streak to 15 games.

John Vanbiesbroeck made 25 saves, making it 249 minutes and 47 seconds since the Flyers have let the puck in the net. The franchise record for longest time without a goal allowed is 265:08, which includes the previous time Philadelphia had four consecutive shutouts, from Dec. 12-22, 1996.

Bruce 4, Sabres 2

Chris Pronger scored two power-play goals and Grant Fuhr made 23 saves to lead St. Louis to a road victory.

Terry Yake and Mike Eastwood also scored for the Blues, who are 2-7-5 in their last 14 road games but just three points behind first-place Detroit in the Central Division.

Maple Leafs 3, Panthers 3

Rob Niedermayer's deflection goal capped off a three-goal comeback for host Florida in the third period.

Ray Whitney added a goal and an assist and Scott Mellanby had three assists to help Martins register their fifth comeback (1-0-4) in its last five games.

Steve Sullivan had an assist and scored a goal at 2:06 into the third period to help stake Toronto to a 3-0 lead.

Coyotes 5, Penguins 3

Jeremy Roenick assisted

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Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

Rios, Davenport top seeds for Aussie Open

MELBOURNE (Reuters) — World No. 2 Marcelo Rios, who pulled out of a warm-up event in New Zealand this week with a back injury, was named yesterday as the top men's seed for the Australian Open, which starts on Monday.

World No. 1 Lindsay Davenport was named as top seed in the women's draw for the first Grand Slam tennis event of the season, to be played at Melbourne Park from January 18-31.

Australian Open organizers followed their custom by sticking with the world rankings in deciding their 16 seeds in the men's and women's draws.

They said they expected Chile's Rios, who was beaten by Petr Korda in last year's final, would take his place in the draw despite his injury.

Korda, who returns to defend his title under a drugs cloud following his positive steroid test at Wimbledon, is unseeded.

The Czech's ranking slipped to 21 after he suffered through poor form and injury through 1998.

The withdrawal of world No. 1 Pete Sampras means only one seeded man — 1995 champion and fifth seed Andre Agassi — has won the tournament before.

Sampras cited exhaustion after a hectic European schedule at the end of 1998.

The loss of the imposing American sees Spain's world No. 3 Alex Corretja named as second seed, followed by local hero and dual US Open champion Pat Rafter.

Australian bookmakers were less inclined to follow the rankings, naming Agassi and big-serving Mark Philippoussis as the most likely to win the tournament. Australia's Philippoussis is seeded 14th.

Two Britons feature in the top 10 men's seeds — Tim Henman at No. 6 and Greg Rusedski at eight — for the first time since 1971.

The women's seedings appeared more settled, with defending champion Martina Hingis named second seed. The Swiss teenager surrendered her No. 1 spot to Davenport after losing last year's US Open final to the American.

Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic, Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and American prodigy Venus Williams round out the top five women's seedings.

Four-time champion Monica Seles — who is unbeaten in 28 matches in Melbourne — was named sixth seed.

Seles' long-time rival Steffi Graf of Germany was named 10th seed as she battles back from a long run of injuries, the first time the four-time Australian Open champion has been outside the top eight seeds since the late 1980s.

Graf stages fighting recovery

SYDNEY (Reuters) — Steffi Graf produced a stirring comeback to beat Venus Williams in the Sydney International quarter-finals yesterday.

Graf, suffering from stomach pains, fought back from a set down and a break in the third set to win 4-6 6-2 6-4 and earn a semifinal showdown against world No. 1 Lindsay Davenport.

"It was a tight situation and I guess I probably had a better attitude towards it," said Graf. "I didn't feel nervous at all but I felt she was getting a little nervous." The German, tuning up for next week's Australian Open, appeared to be heading out of the tournament after she fell 4-2 behind in the third set against one of the modern game's most determined figures.

But Graf called on her vast reserves of experience to win the next four games.

"I enjoy being in that kind of situation. I feel like I don't have anything to lose," Graf said.

"When I get in close situations I seem to know the right things. I don't feel under pressure," Williams said the difference between the players was in the mental approach. "I think I learnt a good lesson today. She definitely wanted to win more than I did and I know I'll have to work harder in the future." Graf also beat Williams' sister Serena in the second round.

Davenport kept her grip on the top ranking with a 6-2 6-3 win over Switzerland's Patty Schyder.

The American was in danger of surrendering the No. 1 slot to Martina Hingis if she failed to reach the last four and her Swiss rival took the Sydney title.

Hingis powered past Belgium's Dominique Van Roost 6-2 6-0 and said of her ranking duel with Davenport: "It means a lot to me. I definitely want to get it back and I'm getting closer and closer with every match."

Hingis play Barbara Schett in today's semifinals after the Austrian won 12 of the last 13 games in an upset 1-6 6-1 6-0 victory over holder Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain.

In the men's competition, top seed Alex Corretja advanced to the semis when his fellow-



ANOTHER VICTORY — Steffi Graf grimaces with delight after beating Venus Williams. (Reuters)

Spaniard Albert Costa retired with a leg injury in the third set with the score at 6-3 4-6 2-0.

He will play Slovakia's Karol Kucera after he fought back

from a set down to defeat Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten 3-6 6-4 6-1.

The other semifinal will be between American Todd Martin,

who beat Australia's Lleyton Hewitt 6-3 6-7 (4-7) 6-4 and Thomas Muster after the Austrian beat local hope Jason Stoltenberg 3-6 6-2 6-3.

Maccabi cruise past Saratov

Katash rejects Knicks \$1m offer, will play rest of season in TA

By BRIAN FREEMAN

Oded Katash may have decided to remain with Maccabi Tel Aviv, but he brought a bit of the NBA with him in leading the blue-and-yellow to a much-needed 92-69 EuroLeague victory over Saratov last night at Yad Eliahu.

Katash scored 30 points, 20 of them in the first half, and dished out seven assists after announcing earlier in the day that he had rejected another offer to join the New York Knicks, despite the team tripling its original salary offer to nearly \$1 million.

The win improves Maccabi's record to 5-7 and sets up a showdown next week at Varese for the fourth and final spot from Group F to advance to the Final 16. The Italian club dropped to 5-7, after losing 82-71 at Panathinaikos last night.

The victory over Saratov, which fell to 2-10, also means that Maccabi is almost assured — with only four games remaining in Group F — from falling into last place and thus losing a spot for an Israeli team next season in the EuroLeague.

A welcome barrage of three-pointers, stingy defense and good overall team play combined with Katash's exploits to give Maccabi fresh hope that the EuroLeague season can be salvaged after all, following two straight losses and poor play even in domestic contests which brought the team's abilities into doubt.

Tel Aviv entered the contest as the worst three-point shooting team in the EuroLeague at 29.7 percent (47-of-58), but exploded for 10-of-15 (66.7%) from behind the arc last night, including 5-of-7 (71.4%) from Katash.

The main reason for the victory, however, was a ferocious defense in the second half which held Saratov to only three points in the period's first 10 minutes as Maccabi built up a slim 46-42 halftime lead into a 69-45 onslaught before the Russians finally started to find the net again.

The Israelis forced 19 Saratov turnovers (Maccabi had only eight, with the majority of those coming after the game was comfortably put away), including twice when the Russians were unable to get a shot off within the 30-second time limit.

Maccabi did not appear headed to such a cakewalk in the first half, when both teams looked evenly matched in exchanging the lead several times.

Saratov, which came into the game as the best rebounding club in the EuroLeague, used a disciplined inside-out offense, good interior defense and their usual strong work on the boards to keep pace with Maccabi for the entire half.

But the Russians' starting power forward Andrei Fetisov went down with an ankle injury a few minutes before halftime. It was an injury which kept him out of the rest of the game, and Maccabi immediately served notice that it meant to exploit the situation.

In the game's most spectacular play, David Benoit finished a slam off an alley-oop from Katash with less than two seconds remaining in the half, which turned out to set the tone for the Tel Aviv rampage at the opening of the second period.

For Maccabi, Katash had 30 points, Victor Alexander 16 (11 in the second half), Doron Sheffer 14, Benoit 13 (11 in the first half), Derrick Sharp 7, Constantin Popa 5, Guy Goodes 3, Gur Stiefel 2 and Nadav Henefeld 2 (with 7 rebounds and 3 assists, which all came in the first four minutes of the second half to spark the 21-3 Maccabi run).

Head coach Pini Gershon decided not to play Zdravko Radulovic at all.

For Saratov, Zakhar Pachoutine scored 29, Guinatas Eitakis 14, Serguei Tchikalkine 8 and Eugeni Pachoutine 7.

EuroLeague Group F				
Team	P	W	L	Pts
Panathinaikos	7	12	4	24
Real Madrid	7	8	4	20
Tau Europa	7	6	6	18
Barcelona	7	5	7	17
Maccabi TA	7	5	7	17
Saratov	2	2	10	14

Korda begins legal challenge in steroid case

MELBOURNE (AP) — Australian Open champion Petr Korda has lodged a legal challenge to the International Tennis Federation's planned appeal against the leniency of his penalty for testing positive to steroids.

Korda's lawyers have begun proceedings in the High Court in England in a bid to stop the ITF appealing its independent panel's decision not to impose a one-year ban on him in the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne.

"It's completely in the hands of my lawyers," Korda said yesterday at the Colonial Classic, a warmup event for his Australian Open title defense starting next week.

"We are asking the court if the ITF can appeal its own decision," Korda said he'd been instructed not to discuss the appeal and he couldn't speculate on its chances of success.

"I want to play tennis at this time. I am not concentrating on what's happening over there," he said.

"You never know your chances in your life, you can't predict it. When we go on court we can't say for sure we are going to win."

"It's in the hands of my lawyers and I will follow them. If I had the right I would talk about it."

Korda's solicitors will ask the High Court to rule that the ITF is not entitled to appeal to the Court of Arbitration.

The ITF independent appeals board ruled originally that because of "exceptional circumstances" it would not impose a 12-month ban on the Czech.

Instead he was fined his Wimbledon prize money and the computer points earned from the event.

Korda will attend a compulsory ATP players' meeting in Melbourne tomorrow which will discuss the issue.

Several players are angry that Korda escaped a ban and want to know the special circumstances which the independent appeals panel accepted for him to avoid suspension.

Johnson stays with Dolphins



DAVID FLORIDA (Reuters) — Amid reports that he had abruptly decided to quit as head coach of the Miami Dolphins, Jimmy Johnson reversed field yesterday and announced that he would stay on and has hired Dave Wannstedt to be his assistant head coach.

Wannstedt, who was fired as head coach of the Chicago Bears

last month, is a close friend of Johnson and has previously served under him with the Dallas Cowboys and at the University of Miami.

Johnson said he was talked out of stepping down by Dolphins' owner Wayne Huizenga, who rushed back to Miami from baseball meetings in California when informed of his coach's intention to resign. Huizenga was in California to complete the sale of the Florida Marlins.

Johnson, who just finished his third year as head coach and general manager of the Dolphins, said he had decided following the recent death of his mother that he needed to spend more time with his family and fiancée.

The key factor in Johnson's decision to return was Huizenga's advice to hire



STAYING AFTER ALL — Jimmy Johnson (r) embraces Dolphins' QB Dan Marino. (Reuters)

Wannstedt as a true assistant head coach who could free Johnson to spend some more time with his ailing father, two grown sons from his first marriage and his fiancée.

Tyson calm during final prefight press conference

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Mike Tyson suggested earlier this week that his mere presence at a fight guaranteed a sellout.

So even with ticket sales reportedly lagging for tomorrow's fight with Francois Botha, it wasn't surprising that Tyson did little at the final prefight press conference to try to get a few more fans in the seats.

Instead, Tyson used Wednesday's event to promote a new line of clothing that his wife is selling.

"I'm here to sponsor it," Tyson said of the clothing line.

The former heavyweight champion actually appeared for only about 15 minutes, then complained that he didn't get to say what he really wanted to say.

An incident a day earlier in which he cursed repeatedly in a conference call with radio and TV reporters led promoters to ask Tyson to tone things down.

"They put a muzzle on me," Tyson said. "I can't really express what I want to today."

Though MGM Grand hotel officials claimed last minute demand would be heavy, tickets priced from \$200 to \$1,200 were reportedly not selling well for Tyson's first fight since he bit Evander Holyfield's ears.

Even promoter Dan Goosen's proclamation that "when Mike Tyson becomes involved in an event, it becomes the biggest spectacle in boxing" fell flat among an audience that didn't come close to filling a theater at the hotel.

About the only buzz generated by the final appearance of the two fighters together came before the press conference even started, when a Tyson associate who goes around dressed in camouflage shouting "guerrilla warfare" was led away in handcuffs after ignoring police requests to calm down.

Steve "Crocodile" Fitch was later released and allowed to join Tyson on the dais.

Botha, who formerly held a piece of the IBF heavyweight title and whose only defeat was to former champion Michael Moorer, used his time to proclaim he was in great shape and couldn't

Yachtswomen slip to fifth

By HEATHER CHAIT

The unpredictable waters off Melbourne's coast turned against Israel's women in the world sailing championships yesterday, shifting them into fifth place.

From their top position in the 470-Olympic division after the first day of competition, Shani Kedmi and Anat Fabrikant are now among the four teams chasing Denmark's Ward sisters, Susanne and Michaela, who have 22 negative points. The race for the silver and bronze medals is fierce with three teams crowded on 38 points while the Israeli pair is just one point behind, on 39.

Four of the twelve sails are still to be held. The final placings cannot yet be gauged since the two worst results of each team are scratched from the final scorecard.

Yesterday, Kedmi and Fabrikant registered scores of 5, 23 and 6. It was also ebb time for the Israeli men in the same category as Eli Zuckerman and Elad Ronen weakened from fifth spot overnight to seventh with placings of 7, 30 and 5. Their overall tally is 77 and their chances for a medal look slim.

Leading the men's class after nine races is the French duo of Benoit Petit and Francois Cuzon. The position of Nir and Ran Shental also worsened yesterday as they moved from eighth to ninth spot, with results of 17, 11 and 7.

All the Israeli teams need to finish within the top eight in order to qualify for Sydney 2000.

In 26th place out of the 33 entries are Zeev Kalach and David Schwartz (13, 19, 27).

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